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PRACTICAL ESSAYS

ON THE

MORNING AND EVENING SERVICES,

AND ON

THE COLLECTS,

IN THE

Liturgy of the Church of England.

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BY

THE REV. THOMAS T. BIDDULPH, M.A.

MINISTER OF ST. JAMES'S, BRISTOL; AND LATE OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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THIRD EDITION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS.——2 Tim. i. 13.

VOL. II.

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PRACTICAL ESSAYS

ON

The Collects

IN THE

LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE omniscience of God is a subject of meditation which, while it is replete with terror to the wicked, affords strong consolation to the penitent believer. Faith in Christ interprets every divine attribute to our advantage, and enables us to contemplate all his awful perfections with serenity and delight. The dawn of day, which drives the felon to his hiding-place, gives confidence, comfort, and security to the faithful citizen. What the heathen moralist pretended to on the score of personal purity, the humble believer actually enjoys through faith in Christ and the testimony of a conscience cleansed by atoning blood. For "whoso hearkeneth" to the voice of wisdom speaking in the Gospel, "shall dwell safely,

"and shall be quiet from fear of evil*." Prov. i. 33.

Our collect contains—an appeal to divine Omniscience—and a prayer addressed to divine Omnipotence.

We therein appeal to divine Omniscience with a view to the comfort of our souls under their manifold troubles, and for the purpose of exciting confidence in the prayer which we afterwards offer. "God knoweth us to be set in the midst "of so many and great dangers, that we cannot "always stand upright."

That our spiritual dangers are "many and "great," is too evident to need much illustration. It appears from the warnings, the promises and exhortations of Scripture, from the offices of Christ and his Spirit, from the feelings and confessions of the saints in all ages, and from our own past experience, if indeed we are true pilgrims who are journeying through the wilderness of this world towards the heavenly Canaan. The warnings which abound in the sacred pages against unbelief, pride, self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, love of the world, despondency, presumption, hypocrisy, apostacy, and numberless other evils,

* Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus,
Non egit Mauri jaculis, neque arcu,
Nec venenatis gravida sagittis,
Fusce, pharetrâ;
Sive per Syrtes iter æstuosas,
Sive facturus per inhospitalem
Caucasum, vel quæ loca fabulosus
Lambit Iaspes.

This ode is certainly beautiful; but it will not bear a comparison with the twenty-third Psalm. "The Lord is my "shepherd," &c. "Though I walk through the valley of "the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art "with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

would be impertinent, if our "dangers" were not "many and great." The "exceeding great and "precious promises" of instruction, consolation, strength, and salvation, would be utterly needless, if our path were smooth and free from peril. The various exhortations to watchfulness, diligence, exertion, fortitude, and to an assumption of the panoply of God, imply a constant exposure to "dangers" on every side. Why is Christ called a Saviour and Deliverer, a Sun and Shield, a Prophet, Priest, and King? Why is he "made of God unto us wisdom, righteous-"ness, sanctification, and redemption?" Why, but because "God knoweth us to be set in the "midst of so many and great dangers, that we "cannot always stand upright." The complaints, the prayers, and the praises of the saints, in all ages, bear testimony to the same fact. And every Christian pilgrim hath the witness in himself, that the representation of our collect is founded in truth.

The multiplicity of our "dangers" is "so "great," that, while avoiding one which is perceived, we fall into another which is unperceived; while fighting against presumption, we are assaulted by despondency; and while endeavouring to counteract a spirit of despondency, we are in danger of presumption. While we are solicitous and diligent in the cultivation of holiness, a self-righteous spirit too often prevails over us; and while we resist the horrible influence of self-righteousness, we are in danger of growing cold in the prosecution of a holy walk. Our situation resembles that of the ship in which St. Paul sailed, which fell into a place where two seas met. If we are saved, it is by miracle, like St. Paul's companions, who, "some on boards, and some

" on broken pieces of the ship, all escaped safe " to land."

As it is impossible to enumerate the " dangers" to which we are exposed, so also it is impossible to state their magnitude. For it is a danger of SINNING to which we are liable. And what is that, but a danger of losing heaven, and of falling into hell. When a soldier in the field of battle contemplates his situation, he reflects, not only that he is continually in danger of being wounded by the bullets which are flying towards him, and which he neither can see nor avoid by any precaution of his own; but also that every one of them is winged with death. Death and destruction issue forth from every discharge of musquetry and artillery of which he hears the report, and it is uncertain whether he may or not be the next victim. Now " lust, when it hath conceived, " bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, " bringeth forth death." And what but almighty power can prevent the birth, growth, and maturity of this destructive evil? If we consider that our " dangers" are not only " so many" as to be more in number than our moments or our thoughts, but that each of them is big with eternal consequences,—that our souls are the precious objects about which our solicitude is required, we shall surely join heartily in the prayer of our church for " strength and protection."

The " many and great dangers" to which we are exposed, are as little under the control of man as the winds and waves. He who alone knows them all can save us from them. Should a question arise, why he suffers his people to be exposed to them when he could at once place them out of the reach of danger—the answer is easy: it is for his glory and for their benefit that for a while

they should remain in the midst of them. Thereby a spirit of humility and thankfulness is formed within the bosoms of his people; and his wisdom, power, truth, and mercy, are magnified. They are prepared for heaven; and to him an income of everlasting glory is secured.

The effect which these dangers have upon us is, that they occasion a frequent stumbling in the path of duty. "We cannot always stand upright." "In many things we offend all;" for "it is not in "man that walketh to direct his steps aright." When we contemplate the narrow path of duty, our deviations from it and our trippings in it will appear to be neither few nor small. Where is the believer who is not conscious of many sins, both of omission and commission, by which his heart has been wounded? What is the meaning of those sighs and groans, the strong crying and tears, which the Christian's closet so often witnesses? Is not their meaning clear? Because he "cannot always stand upright," therefore he weeps, and prays for pardon and strength. "The "flesh lusteth against the spirit, so that he cannot "do the things that he would." He "loves the "law of God after the inner man, but finds another "law in his members warring against the law of "his mind, so that when he would do good evil is "present with him." He is like a man who has a journey of importance to take, and which he is in haste to finish; but, through the slipperiness and roughness of the road, and his own infirmities, his feet continually slide and stumble, so that he cannot make the swift progress that he would. Hence his path is watered with his tears, his breath is spent in frequent complaints, he goes on with a heavy heart, and cries mightily to the strong for strength.

The conduct of our church in her appeal to divine Omniscience respecting the dangers to which we are exposed, differs widely from that of our Lord's disciples on a similar occasion. They, when overtaken by a storm in crossing the lake of Gennezareth, being in imminent danger of perishing through the violence of the tempest, called on their Lord, who was asleep in the hindermost part of the ship, for that help which their perilous situation made necessary. So far they acted rightly. But the manner in which they implored aid was not free from blame. For their minds were agitated by fear, and depressed by unbelief. Their expostulation, "Master, carest "though not that we perish," implied a doubt of their Lord's friendship, if not an accusation of unconcern about them. On the contrary, we are taught to make our humble appeal to God, as acquainted most intimately with the perils of our situation, in the full confidence of faith. Our supplication is debased with no complaint against God. We are persuaded, that he permits us to be in those critical circumstances by which our patience is exercised for wise and gracious ends, that a discovery of our weakness will make way for a display of his almighty power, and in the end be productive of benefit to us and of glory to his name. We therefore proceed to implore his interference on our behalf. Assured of his power to save, and remembering his gracious and faithful promises, we look to him for "strength "and protection."

The omniscience of God is a sweet subject of meditation to those who are at peace with him. "He knows all the dangers by which I am sur-"rounded, and will glorify his own name by "my deliverance out of them. The hairs of my

" head are all numbered by him, and not one of " them can fall to the ground without his per- " mission. He knoweth that, while I am here " in the world, I am in the furnace of affliction " and temptation; and though he should permit " it to be heated seven times hotter than it is " wont to be heated, he will not suffer a hair of " my head to be singed, nor the smell of fire to " pass upon me. All that the fire shall be able " to effect will be productive of benefit. It will " destroy my bonds, so that I shall walk at liberty " in the midst of the furnace. And, during the " process, the Son of God will be with me to " cheer me by his presence."—The present world resembles the den into which Daniel was cast. It is a dreary, inhospitable dungeon. "My soul is " among lions." For wherever I go, and at all times, I know that " my adversary the devil, " like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom " he may devour." But even here, looking to the God of my salvation, I am as safe as though there was no lion near me. In that blessed morning, when the mouth of the den shall be opened for my deliverance, I shall praise him with joyful lips, saying, " My God hath sent his angel, and " hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not " hurt me."—This world is a troubled ocean, over which my voyage lies. But the Almighty Jesus is in the ship in which I sail. And though sometimes he appears to be asleep, yet he " knoweth " that I am set in the midst of so many and great " dangers, that I cannot always stand upright." Like them that go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters, I see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof. I mount up to the

heaven, and go down again to the depths, so that my soul is often melted because of trouble. I reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and am at my wit's end. All my wisdom is swallowed up* in perplexity. Then I cry unto the Lord in my trouble; and he shall bring me out of my distresses. He shall make the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof shall be still. Then shall I be glad, when I am quiet, and when he hath brought me unto the desired haven. Then shall I praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. I shall exalt him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders who are before the throne for evermore.

Reader, is the appeal which you make in our collect to divine Omniscience, the result of a personal consciousness that the description of your case is true? And, while your soul is alive to its dangers, is this appeal productive of comfort? Doth it encourage your faith in addressing to the throne of grace the prayer that follows?

The promises of "strength and protection," which God hath made to his people in the "many "and great dangers" by which they are surrounded, do not supersede the necessity of prayer and watchfulness. For he will be inquired of by us in order that he may save us. The kingdom of God "suffereth violence" from all its besiegers, "and the violent take it by force." God has promised that "sin shall not have the dominion "over us," and that he "will bruise Satan under "our feet shortly;" but these promises can afford comfort to those only who are taught by "the "grace of God which bringeth salvation to deny

* Psal. cvii 27; Marg. reading.

"ungodliness and worldly lusts," who are "fighting the good fight of faith," and who "as "prisoners of hope, turn to the strong hold." Let us labour then to be fervent and constant in prayer, that God would "grant to us such "strength and protection as may support us in "all dangers, and carry us through all temptations, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

That nothing short of divine "strength and "protection" can support us in our dangers "and "carry us through our temptations" is a truth which needs not to be demonstrated to the genuine Christian: for he knows that his uprightness is daily endangered by the world, which continually endeavours to ensnare him both by its frowns and smiles; by the flesh, which constantly solicits a gratification of its lusts; and by the devil, of whose devices he is not ignorant. He finds by mournful experience that the seed of every sin is latent in his heart, and needs only to be watered by temptation in order to bring forth its baneful fruit. He perceives temptations which are suited to his age, constitution, and circumstances in life, from the danger of which he is never free.

But the believer has an almighty Friend, to whom he repairs with confidence in every time of need. Divine "strength" is engaged on his behalf, and shall be "made perfect in his weak-"ness." "God will not suffer" those who trust in him "to be tempted above that they are able; "but will with the temptation also make a way "to escape, that they may be able to bear it." The Christian therefore encourages himself in the Lord his God, and confidently implores "such "strength and protection as may support him in all "dangers and carry him through all temptations."

We do not pray for an immediate rescue from all dangers, and an exemption from all temptations; for this would be inconsistent with the design of God, our own benefit, and his glory. Our prayer coincides with the intercession of our Lord, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them "out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep "them from the evil." In an imitation of the Lord's prayer we cannot pray amiss.—Till the coil of life be all unfolded, we must maintain the conflict, and live in a spirit of watchfulness and prayer. But, blessed be God! the coil is short, the last involution will soon be explicated, and then prayer will be changed for praise.

In the meanwhile, let the humble supplicant, from whose heart the petition of our collect flows to his lips, be comforted and dry up his tears. Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it. Let the praying believer know that, "as "his day is, so shall his strength be;" that his almighty Friend knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, as well as that they "are set "in the midst of so many and great dangers that "they connot always stand upright." He is "able to keep them from falling, and to present "them faultless before the presence of his glory "with exceeding joy." He hath said, "I will "never leave thee nor forsake thee; so that we "may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, I will "not fear" what earth or hell can do against me.

But are there not some among those who orally use our collect, who are unconscious of danger, who trifle with the lion's teeth, and sport themselves in those perils from which they pretend to pray for deliverance? Are there not those who formally worship God in the language of our church, but are unacquainted with alarm from

spiritual perils, lean to their own understandings and strength, or even mock at the exercises, the fears and distresses, the groans and tears, of the contrite soul? Let not such persons expect to derive any thing but increased condemnation from the verbal adoption of our spiritual addresses to the heart-searching God. Let the impenitent and unbelieving consider that the power and faithfulness of God, which are engaged on the behalf of all those "who call upon him, even of "all who call upon him *in truth*," are engaged against "the hypocrites in Zion," and will be glorified in their everlasting destruction. "O "God, who knowest the hypocrisy of the human "heart; grant to all such as are under its influence, "and who deceive themselves with the form of "godliness, while they are destitute of the power "thereof—O grant to them repentance of their "past folly, and pardon of their aggravated sin; "that they may be numbered among the true "worshippers, and become genuine members of "thy holy church, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

O Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy church and household continually in thy true religion; that they, who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by thy mighty power, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE visible church of Christ resembles a field in which wheat and tares grow together. This resemblance forms the substance of a beautiful and instructive parable which our Lord delivered, and which is the gospel appointed for the fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The genuine members of the Christian church are the good seed which God our Saviour hath sown. But therewith "the enemy" of God and man hath blended tares, weeds that are of no value*. This he hath done with a malicious view of spoiling the crop. These, however, must grow together until the harvest, when the reapers will finally separate between hypocrites and the faithful, gathering the latter into the granary of heaven, and casting the former into the fire, that they may be burned.

* The tare, or rather Zizane, which the author has seen in a hot-house of this country, is a plant that nearly resembles wheat in the appearance of its stem, its leaf, and its head. But when it ripens, the head is found to be totally void of grain, and to consist of nothing but chaff, the seed-pod being distinct from it.

In the mean time, the church of Christ is endangered, according to human apprehension, by this unhappy mixture. The true members of God's household, observing the number of weeds which grow in the field around them, fear lest the wheat should be choaked thereby; and being themselves unable to remedy the evil, they fly to the great Proprietor of all, and make their complaint to him, "beseeching him to keep his church "and household in his true religion." Zeal for the honour of God, charity towards all men, and a regard for their own safety, prompt them to the adoption of this entreaty before the throne of grace.

The propriety of praying for the conservation of the church in God's true religion must be evident to all who reflect on the subject. When its origin is considered, when the constant opposition which it has encountered, its own tendency to suicide, and the near approaches which it hath sometimes made to annihilation, are contemplated; its present existence can only be attributed to the exertion of divine power. Like a spark kindled and kept alive on the surface of a boisterous sea, it exists by a continued miracle. Earth and hell have been, and are, intent on crushing the broken reed and on extinguishing the smoaking flax, yet the former still rears its puny head, and the latter still emits a sufficient vapour to prove that it is ignited.—God has placed his church upon a rock, and has engaged that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against "it*."

* "The gates of Hell" is an expression, which seems to be an Hebraism for death; and its meaning to be, that the church shall never be extinct, either in its clergy or people. See a long note on the passage, Matt. xvi. 18, in Poli Syn.; and another in Doddridge's Expositor.

That the danger of the church, independently of divine care, is imminent in our own day, is manifest. For infidelity threatens to crush her, heresies inflict dangerous wounds on her vitals, schisms rend her members piecemeal, lukewarmness chills her blood, and the decay of discipline exposes her to these and a thousand other evils. Alas! "The whole head is sick, and the whole "heart is faint." If ever there was a loud call on the faithful to be earnest in prayer that God would "keep his church and household in his "true religion," it is at the present moment. "False doctrine, heresy and schism, hardness of "heart, and contempt of God's word and com-"mandment," spreading all around us like a deluge, concur in enforcing this important duty.

But what is the specific object of our petition? What is true religion?

The word "religion" expresses the obligation* by which man is bound to God, as his Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer. In the Old Testament it is called "the way of the Lord;" Gen. xviii. 19; Psal. xxv. 9, because it is prescribed by God, and leads to him. In the New Testament it is called "*godliness*," because God is its object, aim, and end. 1 Tim. iii. 16. It consists in the knowledge and worship of God. It is "the acknowledgment "of the truth which is after godliness, according "to the hope of eternal life, which God that "cannot lie promised before the world began." Tit. i. 1, 2.

If it be required what religion binds us to

* Religio dicitur *religando*: quod Deum homini per reconciliationem ejus, hominem Deo per sanctificationem hujus, hominem proximo per charitatem, hominem sibi ipsi per temperantiam et salutis curam religat.—*Markii Christianæ Theologiæ medulla.*

believe, we may safely refer to the articles of our church, as containing an epitome of the doctrine of the Bible. Let these be compared with the Scriptures; let the example of the noble Bereans be followed, and the Scriptures be searched for the purpose of determining whether these articles be true; and it will be found that they contain the truth, and nothing but the truth, and likewise, by expression or implication, all that is necessary to be believed in order to salvation.

If a further question be asked, what religion binds us, to do (for religion consists of faith and practice, both of which are essential parts of its composition) a reference may be made to the ten commandments. And these may be summed up in two comprehensive duties, love to God, and love to man. For "the end of the command-"ment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of "a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. i. 5.

From this brief definition of "true religion" it will appear that, when we pray for the preservation of the church therein, we beseech God to maintain in his household an orthodoxy of belief and holiness of conduct, that he would guard it from heresy, impiety, and superstition, which are the grand enemies of "true religion;" that his church may be "like a tree planted "by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth "his fruit in due season, whose leaf shall not "wither," and whose fruit shall abound to the glory and praise of God. O how important and comprehensive a petition! What Christian man is there, but must join in it with heart and voice. "O Lord, we beseech thee, keep thy "church and household in thy true religion,

" in the profession of the faith which was once " delivered to the saints," in the cultivation of every Christian grace, and in the practice of every Christian duty. Let " faith work by love" throughout all its borders. Suffer not the weeds of heresy to flourish in it, the sacrilegious hand of schism to rend it, the alloy of superstition to debase it, the ague of indifference to chill its blood, nor the foul spots of vice to degrade its dignity or deform its beauty. Let thy royal " daughter be all glorious within, and her clothing " be of wrought gold." Let her be " presented " unto thee in raiment of needle-work," and with joy and gladness be introduced to thy presence. If the sap be diminished in any branch of the ecclesiastical tree which thou hast planted, and its fruitfulness of consequence be prevented, O Lord renew its union and communion with its divine root. Restore it to vigour and fertility. May the leaven of infidelity, superstition, impiety, and immorality, be purged from the whole lump; and may it be newly leavened with faith, purity of worship, devotedness to thee, and universal rectitude of conduct. Particularly we commend to thy care that valuable member of thy mystical body to which we belong. May the church of England live before thee; and be, as hitherto, a peculiar object of thy favour! May her doctrine and worship be preserved, and may discipline be revived in her establishment*. May she continue, to the end of time, a conservatory of thy truth and a witness for her Lord, exhibiting, in the spirit and conduct of all her members, the genuine effects of a true faith in her Lord and

* See the Commination service.

Saviour Jesus Christ! "Finally, whatsoever "things are true, whatsoever things are honest*, "whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things "are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, what- "soever things are of good report," may these exist and abound among us! Then shall we indeed be called "the city of righteousness, the "faithful city."

We need not have gone further than the subsequent part of our collect for a definition of true religion, as it exists in the hearts of all the genuine members of the church and household of God. It is a reliance "on the hope of God's heavenly "grace." This is the substance of it; and though the definition may be verbally extended, every addition made to it must be a ray emanating from this central point. "True religion" is "faith working by love." A dependance on the grace of God for salvation and the hope of eternal life is the foundation of practical religion, on which the whole superstructure of divine worship and personal holiness must be built. It is the only root on which the fruits of righteousness can grow. And let it be carefully observed, that this faith is not a mere act of the understanding, but a divine principle habitually influencing the will and affections; for with the "heart man believeth unto "righteousness, and with the mouth confession is "made unto salvation."

Do we then "lean only on the hope of God's "heavenly grace?" Is his mercy, as it is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord, the sole basis of our hope towards God? Do we exclusively depend thereon? By the answer which conscience gives to these questions we may determine whether we

* Marg. reference, "venerable."

are true members of "the church and household "of God" or not, for this is the description which the church hath herself given of all her children.

Let us not hastily pass over this inquiry, nor dismiss it without close self-examination. To "lean" is to rest ourselves on that which we suppose to be capable of supporting us. To "lean "only" on any prop employed by us, is to rest our whole weight on it exclusively of any other support, and without any dependance on personal ability. Do we thus "lean" on the grace of God, "not trusting in our own righteousness but in his "manifold and great mercies," for pardon, acceptance, sanctification and glory?—But what is it that we confide to this prop? It is nothing less than the "hope" of eternal life; all our expectation of an escape from the wrath to come, and of an inheritance among the saints in light. Do we view, with an awakened eye, the magnitude of that which we confide to the grace of God? And are we so satisfied with the revelation which is made of that mercy, and with the channel through which it flows, that we can rest our hope entirely upon it? Then may we indeed infer our membership "with the church and household of God."

The hope which God's heavenly grace affords, is a "hope which maketh not ashamed." The hope of the penitent believer's bosom is founded on a certainty; for it is built on the basis of divine truth, exhibiting "grace which reigns "through righteousness unto eternal life by "Jesus Christ our Lord." The hope of the Gospel may therefore afford full satisfaction to the mind, and be avowed without fear or shame; for it shall never be productive of confusion to those who possess it. That "heavenly grace" which, flowing from above, leads thitherwards,

can never disappoint those who trust in it. They have present evidence of its efficacy, and of their own interest in it, from its transforming power on their hearts and lives. Thus they are "sealed "with the Holy Spirit of promise;" and this is an "earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption "of the purchased possession unto the praise of "God's glory."

That faith which our collect describes is "not "only the common belief of the articles of our "faith, but it is also a true trust and confidence "in the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus "Christ, and a stedfast hope of all good things "to be received at God's hand; and that although "we, through infirmity, or temptation of our "ghostly enemy, do fall from him by sin, yet if "we return again unto him by true repentance, "he will forgive and forget our offences, for his "Son's sake, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and will "make us inheritors with him of his everlasting "kingdom; and that in the mean time, until that "kingdom come, he will be our protector and "defender in all perils and dangers, whatsoever "do chance; and that, though sometimes he doth "send us sharp adversity, yet evermore he will "be a loving Father to us, correcting us for our "sins, but not withdrawing his mercy finally from "us, if we trust in him, and commit ourselves "wholly unto him, hang only upon him, and call "upon him, ready to obey and serve him. This "is the true, lively, and unfeigned Christian faith, "and is not in the mouth and outward profession "only, but it liveth and stirreth inwardly in the "heart. And this faith is not without hope and "trust in God, nor without the love of God and "of our neighbours, nor without the fear of God, "nor without the desire to hear God's word, and

" to follow the same in eschewing evil, and gladly " doing all good works. This faith (as St. Paul " describeth it) is the sure ground and foundation " of the benefits which we ought to look for and " trust to receive of God—a certificate and sure " looking for them, although they yet sensibly " appear not unto us; and after he saith, he that " cometh to God, must believe both that he is, " and that he is a merciful rewarder of well-doers. " And nothing commendeth good men unto God " so much as this assured faith and trust in him*."

As the " church and household" of God, in its aggregate capacity, needs the continual defence of God's " mighty power," so also does every one of those who " lean on the hope of his heavenly " grace." Indeed, the description which our collect has given of the faithful implies their own helplessness and exposure to injury, and their dependance on divine protection; for it is not only for justification before God that they " lean on " the hope of his grace," but also for daily, hourly, and momentary protection from innumerable dangers by which they are surrounded on every side, and which are not only without but within them. The body of man, in its present fallen state, is not only liable to external accidents without, which may prematurely extinguish the feeble spark of animal life; but there is within itself a tendency to death, the procrastination of which requires the constant aid of food and medicine. And in like manner the spiritual life, which by regeneration is kindled in the fallen soul, is not only threatened by the world and the devil, but it would expire of itself, through the pressure of the flesh, the soul's innate corruption,

were it not maintained by the same "mighty "power" which at first inspired it. "Our life is "hid with Christ in God." It is by his "mighty "power" that it is "defended" from external accidents, which would be fatal to it; and it is by continual communications from him that it is fed and increased, till it hath gained the complete victory over all the diseases which menaced its destruction, and is placed out of the reach of those malign influences which now impede its growth.

That defence which the Christian believer needs, is promised in the word of God, and provided for in the covenant of grace. Those who, "according to God's abundant mercy," are "be-"gotten again to a lively hope by the resurrec-"tion of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inhe-"ritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that "fadeth not away, are kept by the power of God, "through faith, unto salvation, ready to be "revealed in the last time." They who are thus defended are safe indeed. "No weapon that is "formed against them can prosper; and every "tongue that shall rise against them in judgment, "they shall condemn. This is the heritage of "the servants of the Lord, and their righteous-"ness is of me, saith the Lord." They have all the hosts of earth and hell combined for their destruction; but "greater is he that is for them "than all who are against them." Futile were all the efforts of Pharaoh, because the Lord fought for Israel.

"The word*" which St. Peter has used in the passage cited above, 1 Eph. i. 5, and which is translated "kept," is (as Archbishop Leighton has observed) "a military term, used for those who

* φρουρουμενοι.

" are kept as in a fort or garrison-town besieged." So Satan is still raising batteries against this fort, using all ways to take it, by strength or stratagem—unwearied in his assaults, and very skilful to know his advantages, and where we are weakest there to set on. And, besides all this, he hath intelligence with a party within us, ready to betray us to him; so that it were impossible for us to hold out, were there not another watch and guard than our own, and other walls and bulwarks than any that our own skill and industry can raise for our own defence. In this, then, is our safety, that there is a power above our own, yea, and above all our enemies, that guards us—" Salvation " itself our " walls and bulwarks." We ought to watch; but when we do, in obedience to our commander, the Captain of our salvation, yet it is his own watching, who " sleeps " not," nor so much as " slumbers," that preserves us, and makes ours not to be in vain. Psal. cxxvi. 1; Isa. xxvii. 3. And, therefore, those two are jointly commanded, " Watch and pray, " that ye enter not into temptation." " Watch!" there is the necessity of our diligence; " Pray!" there is the insufficiency of it, and the necessity of his watchfulness, by whose power we are effectually preserved. Isa. xxvi. 1. " Salvation hath " God appointed for walls and bulwarks." What more safe, than to be walled with " Salvation " itself? So Prov. xviii. 10:—" The name of the " Lord is a strong tower; the righteous fly into " it, and are safe."

In the use of our collect, we employ the proper means of self-defence, of which the causes are two: 1. Supreme, the power of God; 2. Subordinate, faith, exerting itself by prayer.—The supreme power of God is that on which depends

our stability and perseverance. When we consider how weak we are in ourselves, yea, the very strongest among us, and how assaulted, we wonder, and justly we may, that any continue one day in a state of grace. But when we look on the strength by which we are guarded, the "mighty power" of God; then we see the reason of stability to the end. For Omnipotence supports us, and the everlasting arms are under us.

"Faith," exerting itself by prayer, "is the "second cause" of our preservation; because it applies the first cause, the "mighty power of God." Our faith lays hold upon his power, and this power strengthens faith; and so we are preserved. It puts us within those walls, and sets the soul within the guard of the power of God; which, by self-confidence and vain presumption in its own strength, is exposed to all kind of danger. Faith is a humble, self-denying grace—makes the Christian nothing in himself, and all in God.

"The weakest persons that are within a strong "place, women and children, though they were not "able to resist the enemy if they were alone, yet "so long as the place wherein they are is of sufficient strength and well manned, and every way "accommodated to hold out, they are in safety. "Thus the weakest believer is safe; because, by "believing, he is within the strongest of all defences. Faith is the victory, and Christ sets his "strength against Satan's; and, when the Christian is hard beset with some temptation too "strong for himself, then he looks up to him that "is the great Conqueror of the powers of darkness, "and calls to him, 'Now, Lord, assist thy servant "'in this encounter, and put to thy strength, that "'the glory may be thine.' Or, he addresses the "throne of grace in the excellent words of our

" collect:—'Grant, O Lord, that I, who lean only on " ' the hope of thy heavenly grace, may now and " ' evermore be defended by thy mighty power.' " Thus faith is such an engine, as draws the power " of God and of his Son Jesus Christ into the " works and conflicts which it hath in hand." This is our victory, " even our faith." 1 John v. 4.

" It is the property of a good Christian to mag- " nify the power of God, and to have high thoughts " of it; and therefore it is his privilege to find " safety in that power. David cannot satisfy him- " self with one or two expressions of it; but de- " lights in multiplying them :—' The Lord is my " ' rock and my fortress, and my deliverer; my " ' God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my " ' buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and " ' my high tower.' Psal. xviii. 2. Faith looks " above all, both that which the soul hath, and " that which it wants; and answers all doubts " and fears with this almighty Power, upon which " it rests*."

The excellence of the foregoing citation, and its suitableness to our purpose, will sufficiently apologize for its length. If it be the means of teaching the reader to exercise more lively faith in the mighty power of God while he recites the sweet petition of our collect, if his soul should be more deeply humbled under a conviction of his own helplessness, more comforted by the promises of God, and be better furnished for the remainder of his arduous conflict—the end both of the author and transcriber will be fully answered. Then glory will redound to God, " through Jesus " Christ our Lord." Amen! Amen!

* Archbishop Leighton on the 1st Epistle of Peter, chap. i. ver. 3.

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God and heirs of everlasting life; grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

On this last Sunday after the Epiphany, we again advert to the Epiphany itself, or the manifestation of God in the flesh for the salvation of a ruined world. Our collect for this day seems to be a link of connexion between the incarnation and the sad yet joyful events of that blessed season which we are approaching; in which we shall commemorate the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that succeeded. We shall soon be called to contemplate the Captain of our salvation engaged in single combat, and, as it were, hand to hand, with the God of this world, during forty tremendous days and nights. We shall soon behold him sustaining the wrath of God, and sweating great drops of blood beneath its pressure. We shall "look upon him whom we "have pierced," and mourn over our expiring Lord, while hanging on the ignominious cross.

We shall "see the place" of sepulture, "where "the Lord lay" in the lowest state of humiliation. There, however, we shall join also in his triumphs, while he rises a conqueror over death and hell, and by faith shall follow him in his ascent from Mount Olivet to his throne in glory.

In the interim, we are invited to review the ends for which "God was manifest in the flesh," and to unite in prayer for a participation of his grace.

The preface, or introductory part of our collect, recites the ends proposed in the incarnation of the Son of God. He "was manifested, that "he might destroy the works of the devil," and "make us the sons of God and heirs of ever-"lasting life." Important objects! worthy of God to propose, and worthy of that gracious interposition which was necessary for their accomplishment.

Our collect is addressed to Jehovah, the first person in the Godhead, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fountain of salvation, the supreme Agent in the covenant of redemption. For though, in the divine essence, neither of the three persons is "before or after another, none is "greater or less than another;" yet, in the economy of grace, a pre-eminence is assigned by the Scriptures to God the Father, and the Son and Spirit are represented as acting in a subordinate capacity. This, however, is the result of voluntary arrangement in the counsels of the triune Jehovah. And, therefore, we are not from hence to infer that there is any "difference "or inequality" among the "co-essential and "co-eternal" Three; but, that which we "believe "of the glory of the Father, the same we are to "believe of the Son and the Holy Ghost."

"The Son of God was manifested," or, as St. Paul expresses it, "God was manifest in the "flesh." He, whom our collect calls the Son of God, is, according to the Apostle, very God. This is the doctrine of the Old and New Testament. In the former, the "child" who is "born," and the "Son" who is "given to us," is "the "mighty God, and the everlasting Father." His name is "Immanuel—God with us." In the latter we are informed, that "the Word was "made flesh;" and, lest any doubt should arise respecting the person intended by this mysterious name, we are assured that the "Word was "God, by whom all things were made, and with-"out whom was not any thing made that was "made." This adorable person had, for many ages, revealed himself to his people in the glory that abode on the mercy-seat of the Tabernacle and Temple; but, in the fulness of time, he assumed our nature, whereby God and man became one Christ. In him Jehovah was manifested; for Christ is "the image of the invisible "God, the brightness of his glory, the express "image of his person."

The first object proposed by the incarnation of Jehovah, which is specified in our collect, is "the "destruction of the works of the devil." The words of our collect are cited from 1 John iii. 8:—"For this purpose the Son of God was mani-"fested, that he might destroy the works of the "devil." Some information respecting the design of Christ's appearance in the world, the devils themselves seem to have obtained, as we may infer from the language which they used in their addresses to him. One of them said, when expecting a dispossession from his usurped habitation by the power of Christ, "Let us alone! what have

"we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? "Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee "who thou art—The Holy One of God." Mark i. 24. Those also who were ejected from the Gergasene demoniac, cried, saying, "What have "we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" Matt. viii. 29. To this overthrow of the devil's kingdom our Lord refers when he says, "I beheld "Satan, like lightning, falling from heaven."

In order that we may understand the object of the Messiah's mission, it is necessary to observe, that the works of God were marred through sin which the devil had introduced into them. When the universe came out of the hand of its divine Artificer, it was pronounced by the lips of unerring wisdom to be "very good." It was calculated to answer the end of its creation as an instrument of giving glory to God. And the glory of his own name and attributes is, and must be, the supreme object of all God's operations. "Jehovah hath made all things for himself." The worth, excellency, and perfection of the creature arises therefore from its adaptation to this purpose. In connexion with this supreme and ultimate object of creation, the beneficent Former of all things proposed to himself another important aim, the happiness of an innumerable multitude of animate and rational beings, who should owe their existence and its comforts to his kindness. With a relation to this gracious purpose also the world was "very good," when God rested from his work. Man was furnished with the means of felicity, and every thing by which he was surrounded was suited to contribute thereto.

But awful was the change which sin intro-

duced. While it debased man, the master-piece of divine skill, the grand object of creating love, for whose benefit this theatre was built and its vaulted ceiling studded with sun and moon and stars,—while it debased man both in his soul and body to a total inaptitude to answer the end of his being with respect both to his Creator and himself, it rendered man the enemy of God, and God the enemy of man, and at the same time armed all the creatures against their earthly lord. Sin, sickness and death, all the disorder that prevails both in the macrocosm and microcosm, all evil moral or natural, constitute "the works "of the devil," and are the effects of that horrible scheme which was fabricated in hell, and carried into execution in paradise against the glory of God and the welfare of mankind.

The dissolution* of the fabric of sin and misery which that malicious architect of mischief, the devil, has reared,—the recovery of mankind from the apostacy into which they were seduced by the temptation of Satan,—their deliverance from the guilt, the pollution, and the bondage of sin, and their restoration to the favour, the image, and the enjoyment of God, constitute an undertaking worthy of his wisdom, grace, and power. Well might angels sing at its commencement, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth "peace, good-will towards men." Wonderful as the means divinely appointed for the execution of this glorious object were, the end to be accomplished justifies their adoption; for eternal glory will thereby be secured for God, and eternal happiness be conferred on an innumerable multitude of rational and immortal beings.

* Ινα λυση τα εργα τυ Διαβολυ.

The demolition of that infernal fabric of deformity, of which the foundation was laid in the fall of our first parents, and which has employed all the artifice and power of hell for nearly six thousand years, is already begun: even now the edifice nods to its fall. "The Son of God was "manifested that he might destroy it," and he could not engage in its demolition without eventual success. The foundation of the building is already sapped, and the construction of the parts is weakened. For "we look for a new heaven "and a new earth in which dwelleth righteous-"ness." Every vestige of Satanic influence will soon be banished from the sphere of divine benevolence, and the devil and his children be confined to their own place, where alone any remains of his works will be found.—Blessed prospect! May our hearts exult in the contemplation of its completion! "Accomplish," Lord Jesus, "the number of thine elect, and hasten "thy kingdom!"

A further object proposed by the manifestation of the Son of God is our own adoption into the family of God, and our hereditary participation of eternal life. This unspeakable benefit, although comprehended in the former view of the subject, demands specific mention on account of our personal interest in it. For what would the demolition of Satan's edifice be to us, unless we were made partakers of a share in the final redemption? How miserable would our state have been, if God had determined to sweep the scene of diabolical influence with the besom of destruction, so as to plunge all those who had joined with the devil in his opposition to holiness, and had been defiled by his touch, into the infernal pit, and if he had purposed to create a new race of human

creatures for the exhibition of his praise! Or, if the annihilation of his enemies had been part of his plan, though less terrible to contemplate than the former idea, yet is it a subject from which the rational mind shrinks with dread. Nothing but the despair which guilt occasions can reconcile the imagination to it. Whatever glory might have redounded to God from either of these modes of procedure, to us it could have afforded no ground for gratitude or joy.

But "the Son of God was manifested to make "us the sons of God." By the effusion of his precious blood he hath satisfied divine Justice, atoned for our sin, and fulfilled the law in our behalf. Hereby he hath removed all the obstacles out of the way of our re-admission to the divine favour; and by his meritorious righteousness he hath procured for all who receive him as their Saviour, a right of becoming sons of God*. By the influence of his Spirit, accompanying his word we are made new creatures, our connexion with the devil and his works is dissolved, and a state of communion between God and our souls is renewed. By the power of divine grace the rebel is subdued, the enemy reconciled, the heart which bore the impress of hell receives the superscription of heaven; the image of the devil is erased, and replaced by the likeness of God; the child of Satan is transformed into a child of God.

O glorious work of omnipotent grace! May we be witnesses of its reality, and monuments of its glory! May we continually and exultingly say, while we contemplate the progress of the work, "This hath God wrought." May we with every breath bless his name, who "was

* John i. 12. Εξουσιαν.

" manifested to destroy the works of the devil, " and to make us the sons of God*."

Connected with our sonship is a patrimony, of which we receive possession by hereditary right: for if we are children, then are we also " heirs, " heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." " Eternal life is the gift of God by Jesus Christ " our Lord." We derive it by succession from its original proprietor, through Christ Jesus as our elder brother, and in consequence of our relation to him. The possession of our inheritance, if we are the sons of God, doth not rest on a peradventure; but our right is indefeasible and unalienable. And because we are heirs, our heavenly Father furnishes us, in this state of nonage, with such an education as is suitable to the future dignity and rank of his children and the participants of his glory. Even now he assigns to us privileges of inestimable value, and gives us such tokens of his paternal love as shew that the inheritance is ours, and that it is worthy of our most devout and ardent aspirations.

But may the language of St. John be legitimately addressed to the writer and reader of these pages? May it be said by us, " Behold, " now are we the sons of God, and it doth not " yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, " that when he shall appear, we shall be like " him, for we shall see him as he is?" Oh! then, " What manner of persons ought we to be," in expressions of admiring gratitude, and " in all " holy conversation and godliness." Let us be " followers of God as dear children." Let us " count all things loss and dung for the excellency

* As the doctrine of adoption has been considered in our review of the collect for Christmas-day, the notice here taken of it is very brief.

" of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord," who " was manifested to make us the sons of " God, and heirs of eternal life."

This leads us to the prayer which is connected with the introduction that we have reviewed, and is founded thereon. We implore grace that, " having this hope," even the hope of " eternal " life," " we may purify ourselves even as Christ " is pure; that when he shall appear in power " and great glory, we may be made like unto " him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where " with the Father and the Holy Ghost he liveth " and reigneth, ever one God, world without end."

The first part of our prayer relates to sanctification as a preparative for the inheritance of the saints in light. It is founded on 1 John iii. 3, where the beloved disciple, after that he had exhibited to the view of faith the blessed prospect which Christianity presents, adds, " And every " man that hath this hope in him, purifieth him- " self even as Christ is pure." The hope of the Gospel is not an inert uninfluential principle; no, it produces the most blessed and powerful effects. For it is impossible that any man, who has been awakened to a perception of his natural sin and misery, who has believed in the Son of God for pardon and salvation, in whose heart redeeming love has been shed abroad, and who derives therefrom a well-founded expectation of " eternal life;" it is absolutely impossible that he should be indifferent to the attainment of moral purity. Having received the exceeding great and precious promise of eternal life, the real Christian will be earnestly solicitous to " cleanse himself from all filthiness " both of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holi- " ness in the fear of God." For he knows that purity of heart and life is the natural fruit and

necessary effect of that faith, which justifies the soul before God by embracing the merit of the Saviour of sinners; and that it is the characteristic of a true faith, so that a true faith may be thereby distinguished from a false one; as a tree is known by its fruits. Hence he rightly concludes, that a growing conformity to Christ is the most satisfactory evidence which he can have of being in Christ, and justified by his blood. He is well aware that the cause of justification is not inherent in him, but imputed to him. The proof, however, of this imputation he derives from a personal resemblance of Christ; which, though its outline be yet faint and imperfectly traced, he longs to have progressively filled up, till the picture is completed, and his joy fulfilled. He moreover remembers that God hath said, "Be ye holy, for "I am holy;" and that the "sanctification" of his people is the express "will of God." And in the command and will of God, his heavenly Father, he finds a thousand arguments and motives to the cultivation of vital godliness. It is sufficient to stimulate his mind to exertion, that this is "good and acceptable to God his Saviour." He feels also the strong obligations of gratitude. The word *redemption* entwines around his heart, a threefold cord of love, which cannot be broken, the love of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, whereby he is powerfully drawn and sweetly constrained to an imitation of Christ. On his cross motives are suspended, bright and innumerable as the dew-drops of the morning, by whose beauty his eye is attracted and his heart won. The cross is a magnet that is irresistible, when the soul is brought into a state of approximation to it and contact with it. Its holy violence overcomes the power of sin, and creates

an entirely new bias in the affections. Every generous feeling of the breast is put in motion by a sight of Calvary. With the emotions of gratitude self-interest concurs; for the Christian believer knows, that purity of heart is an essential pre-requisite and qualification for the beatific vision and the enjoyment of heaven. Without a spiritualized disposition he could find no pleasure in the various duties and acts of worship which the church on earth performs; and how then, without it, could he find delight in God's presence, and in the exercises of uninterrupted devotion, with the church above? The society of angels, the songs of the blessed, the joys of heaven, would be irksome to an unsanctified heart. Hence he infers, that "without holiness no man can see "the Lord;" and hence he is excited "to purify "himself even as Christ is pure."

The desire of a conformity to Christ in purity of heart is always accompanied with a conviction of the impossibility that attends the attainment of it without divine grace. The desire, and its successful prosecution, are both from God. And, therefore, the words of the Apostle John, in which he states the indissoluble connexion between faith and holiness, between the hope of the Gospel and the cultivation of moral purity, are with strict propriety in our collect converted into supplication. "Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having "this hope in us, may purify ourselves even as he "is pure." The "faith which works by love," and the love which faith produces, are both communications from him, from whom proceeds, "every good and perfect gift." The sanctification of a fallen spirit is not a work, to which finite power is competent. The regenerate soul is "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus "unto good works." "If any man be in Christ,

" he is a new creature." To " put off the old " man, which is corrupt, and to put on the new " man, which after God is created in righteousness " and true holiness," is the sinner's own act; but the ability to perform it must be derived entirely from God.

The extent of that purification to which the Christian aspires, for which he prays, and which he knows to be essential to the consummation of his bliss, opens before him a wide and distant prospect, which his eye, in its present state of weakness, cannot reach. But though the scope of his mind, " the mark of the prize of his high " calling," is but dimly discerned, or rather is unseen, yet he pants to obtain it, and despairs not of success. To be " pure as Christ is pure," is the aim of his ambitious soul, and to arrive at " the measure of the stature of the fulness of " Christ." With this object in view, he " for- " gets the things that are behind, and presses " forward to those which are before;" not counting himself to have apprehended, but intent on " one thing," *viz.* to " apprehend that for which " also he is apprehended of Christ Jesus."

We are not, however, from hence to infer, that a perfect resemblance of the divine character is attainable by any creature. In every branch of moral exellence we shall indeed resemble Christ, when " we see him as he is;" but in the degree of holiness we shall ever be infinitely below him.

" Lo, he discerns, discern'd by him alone,
" Spots in the sanctities around his throne;
" Nor trusts his noble ministers of flame
" To yield him service unalloyed with blame*."

* Scott's Job, ch. iv. 18, to which is annexed the following note. " *In his angels he observeth failure:* תהלה. *The* " LXX. renders it σκολιον τι, *something wrong.* Schultens

Before we proceed, let us pause for the purpose of inquiring, whether the petition of our collect which we have considered, be found to express the real desire of our own souls. Many persons would gladly escape from hell, who feel no anxiety to obtain a meetness for heaven. Many talk of heaven, and flatter themselves with the hope of an admission thereinto, who have no conception of its nature as a state of perfect holiness, nor any conviction of the necessity which exists for the attainment of conformity to the image of God in order to a participation of its pleasures. The future state of which they conceive differs little from the paradise of Mohammedism; and it is certain that, without regeneration and a renewal in the spirit of their minds, they will be awfully disappointed in the place of their eternal abode; for it must be the place of "outer darkness, where "there is wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Do we then long to be "pure as Christ is "pure?" And do we give proof of our sincerity in the prayer which we offer by a constant opposition to sin, and by a continual effort to "put on "the Lord Jesus Christ?" For it is certain that we do not desire to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, unless we endeavour, through divine grace, to imitate him in the temper of our minds and in the conduct of our lives. Let conscience then determine our sincerity or insincerity. And let hope or fear prevail according to

"proves from the Arabic, that it denoteth *slip* or *failure*. "The expression is much too faint for the crime of the "angels who sinned and fell from their first estate. Nothing "more seems to be meant than the imperfection of the most "exalted spirits, in comparison with the infinite perfection "of the Deity." Another translation of the passage is however given in the margin of the Bible.

the testimony which conscience bears. If our prayer be hypocritical, then have we no well-founded "hope of eternal life;" for he that hath this hope in him "purifieth himself even as Christ "is pure." We can in this case, have no satisfactory evidence that we are "the sons of God "and heirs of eternal life."

The second part of our prayer relates to glorification, to which the high-way of holiness leads. If indeed we are enabled, through grace, to "purify ourselves even as Christ is pure," if the attainment of a conformity to his image be the great business of our lives, then, "when he shall "appear again with power and great glory, we "shall be made like unto him in his glorious "kingdom." This is the consummation of a Christian's joy, the ultimate aim of his soul, the essence of future felicity.

This part of our collect alludes to a passage which we have before quoted, 1 John iii. 2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it "doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we "know that when he shall appear we shall be "like him; for we shall see him as he is." Our liturgy is so replete with the phraseology of Scripture, that we may compare it to a beautiful robe richly embroidered with gold.

The sight of Christ by faith has invariably a sanctifying tendency; for, "beholding, as in a "glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed "into the same image from glory to glory, even "as by the Spirit of the Lord." And the more clear is the knowledge of Christ which faith enjoys, the more effectual it is to the production of purity. Now, if faith, with all the disadvantages of "seeing through a glass darkly," purifies the heart, it is reasonable to infer that the open vision

of him "face to face," will perfect what faith has begun. "We shall be like him when he appears, "for we shall see him as he is." If, while the veil remains on our Redeemer's countenance, the gleams of glory that burst through it, transform the irradiated soul into his own likeness, what may not be expected from the beatific vision of God in Christ when the veil is removed? If the face of Moses shone in consequence of a temporary interview with the Lord God of Israel, how brightly shall we shine when we are introduced into his immediate presence! Then we shall resemble him in all his imitable perfections; our "bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious "body," and our souls be "without spot, or wrinkle, "or any such thing." This resemblance of Christ will be produced by the sight of him, and perfect holiness and perfect happiness be our portion for ever. To be ever "looking unto Jesus" is now our duty and privilege, is the mean of sanctification, and the antepast of glorification.

When Christ "appears the second time without "sin unto salvation," it will be "with power and "great glory;" for he will come in the "glory of "his Father and the holy angels." He "shall be "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that "know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of "our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished "with everlasting destruction from the presence "of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." "He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and "to be admired in all them that believe." His "power" will be demonstrated in the destruction of his enemies and the salvation of his people. The brightness of his "glory" will confound those

that hate him; and, while it dazzles, will beatify those that "love his appearing."

"In his glorious kingdom, where, with the "Father and the Holy Ghost" our adorable Redeemer "liveth and reigneth, ever one God, "world without end," those whom faith has transformed into a resemblance of him here, shall live and reign with him for ever. That glorious kingdom is the continuation of an empire now established. Its glory indeed is now in a measure obscured, and its administration latent. At his appearing that obscurity shall be removed, and the sceptre of the King of kings become visible, and his throne apparent to all. But the kingdom is the same, which now exists in his church. We must therefore become his subjects here, if we would participate in "his glorious "kingdom" hereafter. We must now submit to his righteous sway, if we would participate in the privileges of the heavenly city. For, without a submission now made before him, we shall hear him say when he cometh in his glory, "These "mine enemies who would not that I should "reign over them, bring them hither, and slay "them before me." Lord Jesus, who "wast "manifested to destroy the works of the devil," make us "the sons of God and heirs of eternal "life" by adoption and grace: enable us to "purify ourselves, even as thou art pure; that, "when thou shalt appear in power and great "glory, we may be made like unto thee in thy "glorious kingdom, where, with the Father and "the Holy Ghost, thou livest and reignest, ever "one God, world without end. Amen."

THE SUNDAY CALLED SEPTUAGESIMA*, OR THE THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.

O Lord, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people, that we who are justly punished for our offences may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

THIS collect contains,—a prefatory petition for a favourable audience to our prayers—a statement of our case on which we found our request—an act of supplication for divine interposition on our behalf—a strong argument to enforce success in our application to the throne of grace—the ground on which our hope is built—and a doxology, or ascription of praise, to the Triune Jehovah.

* "Among the several reasons given for the names of "these Sundays (*viz.* Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quin-"quagesima) the most probable seems to be this: the first "Sunday in Lent, being forty days before Easter, was for "that reason called Quadragesima Sunday, which in Latin "signifies forty; and fifty being the next round number "above forty, as sixty is to fifty, and seventy to sixty, "therefore the Sunday immediately preceding Quadra-"gesima Sunday, being farther from Easter than that was, "was called Quinquagesima (or fifty) Sunday: and the two "foregoing, being still farther distant, were for the same "reason called Sexagesima and Septuagesima (sixty and "seventy) Sundays."—*Wheatly.*

On the prefatory petition little needs to be said; because it is common to this collect with some others, and, with a very small variation of the phraseology, has already passed under our review. It breathes importunity and humility; for it is an earnest appeal to divine favour. Should the frequent use of such an address be objected to, it may be illustrated and vindicated by a scriptural anecdote. In the Acts of the Apostles we are informed that Peter, after his miraculous deliverance from prison, went immediately to the house of a Christian friend, and knocked at the door for admission. The servant who came to the door, in consequence of the perturbation of her mind occasioned by the sound of Peter's voice, instead of opening the door ran back to those who were within to inform them who was at the door. Now, how did Peter act? Did he sit down contented at the sill, having once knocked, determining to wait till accident or the morning-light should occasion the door to be opened? No: we are told that "he continued "knocking." And this surely was the part of wisdom in his case, and is so in ours likewise when we come to the door of divine mercy. We are to "knock, until it be opened unto us." Our church may moreover be exculpated from the charge of vain repetition, by a higher and more appropriate example than the case of Peter affords. For our Lord Jesus Christ in his agony prayed thrice, repeating the same words. Real fervour of spirit will manifest no anxiety about a variation of words. Repetition is its natural expression.

We proceed now to consider the statement which we make of our case, and on which the special petition of our collect is founded. We confess that we "are justly punished for our

"offences." This confession contains two things —cause and effect. We shall begin with the latter.

That we "are punished," is a truth of which every man has the witness in himself. It requires no proof from the deductions of logic, or the demonstrations of mathematics. We are painfully furnished with experimental evidence, such as would arise from a body partly consumed in the flames in support of the existence of fire. That "man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly "upward," cannot then be denied. No station, rank, age, country, or constitution, exempts a single individual of mankind from the common lot of fallen humanity. This confession therefore is suitable to the lips of every individual in every congregation. The penalty of transgression began to be inflicted on the first transgressors immediately after their fall. Adam had been warned, that, in the very day that he ate of the forbidden fruit, he should surely die; and in that very day he proved the veracity of the threatening. For he became mortal, liable to death, and all its train of preparatives and forerunners. He tasted the bitter fruits of iniquity, and discovered, too late, that "the wages of sin is death." And all his seed, who are, by derivation of being, naturally implicated in his guilt, are also partakers of his punishment. Sin and sorrow are correlatives. Sorrow cannot exist without sin, nor sin without sorrow.

The penalty of transgression is co-extensive with the transgressing nature. Man is a compound being, consisting of a body and a soul; and both have joined in rebellion against God. The heart of Adam coveted the forbidden fruit, and his hand took it. The hearts of his children

are alienated from God, and the "members" of their bodies are "instruments of unrighteousness." Our souls and bodies are mutually corrupted and corrupters of each other. Both therefore feel the bitter consequences of sin in the present world; and both are exposed to its fearful reward in the world to come. There is a lake of fire prepared to torment for ever without destroying the body, and a worm that never dies to prey eternally on the lost soul. The soul however was the primary and is the chief agent in transgression, and therefore is the greatest sufferer both in this and the future life, if it depart hence in an impenitent state.

The corporeal sufferings of mankind in the present life are very great. They begin with our beginning, and continue to our death. Hunger and thirst, cold and heat, poverty, diseases, accidents, pain and death, all proclaim the righteous displeasure of God against sin, and are all designed to promote the humiliation of the guilty sufferer. That conviction of sin does not arise out of every day's experience, is a strong proof that the understanding of man is darkened, and that his reason is in an impaired state. For how natural is an inquiry into the cause of those sufferings which we hourly feel! And yet how generally is it neglected! Did a wise, a good and almighty Being make us what we are? Could we, consistently with his perfections, come out of his creating hands in our present state of weakness, disgrace, and suffering? For so soon as we begin to live, we begin also to die. The miseries of life are the agonies of death. Human life, from first to last, is a dying existence. Yet how many persons live as if no proofs of their fallen and guilty state existed! The grace of considera-

tion is no small favour from God; for it is usually the first fruits of an abundant harvest.

The punishment which is divinely inflicted on the human soul, even in the present state, is still more grievous, and marks more strongly the displeasure of God on account of sin. Disappointments, bereavements, fears, and anxieties, as wave after wave invades the shore in a continual succession, harass and torment the mind. The bosom of fallen man is like a troubled sea, sometimes lashed into violent agitations by storms to which it is ever exposed, and never perfectly at rest. In its calmest moments there is some undulation. No man but the Christian, whose conscience is pacified by faith in the Son of God, and whose heart has found repose in the hope of salvation through him, and he only in some favoured seasons, can say, I am happy and contented, free from fear and anxiety, and replenished with consolation.

An ancient mode of punishing criminals affords a striking representation of human life. The criminal was put into a barrel stuck with spikes, whose sharp points were directed inwards. The barrel was then rolled down a declivity. As the machine revolved, the miserable convict was continually receiving fresh stabs in every part of his tortured frame, till at length he expired under accumulated wounds. It was in a manner somewhat similar that the heroic Regulus, the Roman consul, was punished at Carthage. He was "put," says Rollin, "into a kind of chest full of nails, "whose points wounding him, did not allow "him a moment's ease, either day or night*."

* *Rollin's Ancient History*, vol. i. p. 211. In arcæ genus stipatus, undique extrinsecus clavis confixus tot cruces sen-

The declivity is the space of time between our birth and the grave. As we roll along, we are continually receiving fresh stabs from afflictive occurrences, till at length we expire under the sentence of the divine law. The infidel who denies the doctrine of the Bible and of our church on the subject of original sin, because in his estimation it is contrary to the dictates of justice, would do well to consider whether, if he steer clear of atheism, and admit God to be the moral Governor of the universe, his reason will not be more puzzled, on his views of justice, to account for the natural evil which exists in the world, and which is experienced even by those "who have not sinned after the similitude of "Adam's transgression." This is a difficulty which has never been solved, and never can be solved, on any other principle than that which revelation lays down.

But the punishment which is endured in the present life, is only "the beginning of sorrows." For the penalty of sin will be most severely exacted in the world to come, if guilt be not previously taken from our souls by faith in the Son of God. That the "death" which is declared by St. Paul to be "the wages of sin," is *eternal* death, appears from the other branch of his antithesis, wherein he states "*eternal* life" to be "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And that this eternal death doth not consist in

sit.—*Aurel. Vict. de viris illustr.* Regulus Carthaginem reversus, omni suppliciorum genere conficitur. Nam præter cæteros cruciatus, domunculâ angustâ inclusus, quæ magnitudini corporis ejus responderet, intus crebris clavis ferreis transfixâ, periit: cum nec immotus stare posset et quieturus statu corporis utrumque inclinato, in ferreas cuspides incideret.—*Gell.* lib. vi. cap. 4.

annihilation, appears from what our Lord says respecting lost souls, *viz.* that their "worm never "dieth, and that the fire is not quenched." Absurd, therefore, is the hope of many persons, who, while they live in the neglect of the great sacrifice for sin, seem to think that their present sufferings will so atone for it that they shall escape "from the wrath to come." If any personal sufferings of the transgressor could have been expiatory and purgatorial, the divine Mediator might have remained in heaven, and have spared himself the agonies which he endured on our behalf. To him, and to him alone, must our eyes be directed, if we would have "these light afflic-"tions, which are but for a moment," to "work "out for us a far more exceeding and eternal "weight of glory." Without an interest in him, the groans of mortality are anticipations of "weep-"ing and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

The punishment, however, which sinners endure in the present life, is to be considered in a twofold light, and is distinguished by the state of the persons on whom it is inflicted, and by the intention of God who inflicts it. It is either destructive or corrective. Its object is either the excision or amendment of the punished party. It is the act of a just and angry Judge, or of a kind and gracious Father.

Now, under one or the other of these aspects, all national calamities—such as war, pestilence and famine, and all personal troubles, such as sickness, poverty, bereavements of various other kinds, and even death itself, are to be considered. Oh! what an important question it is, Under which of these views our present national visitations are to be classed!—whether, in their object and end, they resemble the punishment inflicted

on the old world, whose inhabitants were swept away by the besom of destruction; that which Sodom and the other cities of the plain experienced; that of Egypt, in the time of Moses; or of the Canaanites, by the instrumentality of Joshua;—or whether they may be classed under the same description with the divine chastisements, which Israel from time to time experienced. Do our personal afflictions resemble those of Abraham, Joseph, Job, David, Paul, and the whole palm-bearing company, who have all "come out of great tribulation, having washed "their robes and made them white in the blood "of the Lamb, and are therefore before the throne "of God?"—or, are they specimens of the same kind with those of Cain, Absalom, Ahitophel, Herod, and the thousands who have been made monuments of divine vengeance, both in this world and in the other?

Our collect teaches us to confess, that the punishment which we endure is the just reward of our offences. When we behold the many wounded wretches who crowd all the wards of this great hospital, the world, it is natural to institute an inquiry, Who inflicted these innumerable wounds under which humanity groans? The answer of our church and of the Bible is—SIN. If we contemplate the world as a great charnel-house, and propose the question which Jehu asked, when he saw the two heaps composed of the heads of Ahab's sons, "Who slew all these?" the answer of truth is—SIN.

Let us pause, and take a retrospective, present, and prospective view of the world, in relation to these questions. In consequence of the divine benediction on Adam and Eve, the human race has multiplied from the first pair to successive

millions. The world is supposed to contain at present nine hundred and fifty-three millions of inhabitants. What proportion its population, at former periods, may have borne to the present, it is not easy to determine. But, every thirty years, the existing generation has been succeeded by a new one, as the leaves drop off in autumn, and give place to a fresh foliage in the ensuing spring*. What innumerable multitudes must have existed! But where are they now? Let our church-yards answer the question in part; and let the dust under our feet, and the waters of the great deep, supply further information on the awful subject. The present state of the world is scarcely less melancholy in review than the past: for we ourselves have received the mortal stab, and are also dying. Nine hundred and fifty-three millions who now survive, are expiring. Not an infant lives, who has not received the sentence of death in himself. Who among us is free from the danger of it the next moment? In a short time, we shall all be numbered with our ancestors in the land of forgetfulness. Oh! let the miseries of human nature be surveyed, and it will be a matter of surprise that one thoughtless, gay, and trifling inhabitant should be found on the face of the earth. Such a temper of mind ill becomes the purlieus of a hospital and a charnel-house. There are many, however, who, on the proposal of an inquiry into the cause of the car-

> Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
> Now green in youth, now with'ring on the ground;
> Another race the following spring supplies:
> They fall successive, and successive rise.
> So generations in their course decay,
> So flourish these, when those are past away.
>
> *Homer*, b. vi.

nage which we survey, will satisfy themselves with saying, Such a man died of a fever, a second of a consumption, a third of old age, a fourth in the field of battle, and a fifth by an unexpected accident. But a contemplative mind will look further, and seek for some general murderer, to whose fury these ravages are to be attributed. And that murderer is SIN: for "by one man sin "entered into the world, and death by sin, and "so death passed upon all men, for that all have "sinned." Now, we think and speak with abhorrence of a murderer. Of the man who murdered three thousand eight hundred Turks in the fortress of Jaffa—who poisoned five hundred and eighty of his own soldiers—who has spread through Europe desolation and death, we think and speak with no common degree of horror and indignation. Were we to see a man who had murdered our parents, our children, the wife of our bosom, and our beloved friend—who had repeatedly aimed his dagger at our own breast, and openly avowed his fixed intention of taking away our own lives, what sort of emotions should we feel towards him? This assassin is SIN. How strange does it seem that any persons should seek their safety and happiness in the society, friendship, and bosom of such a fiend! Yet how many do this! But the reader of these pages, it may be hoped, is not of this number. Let him then inquire what feelings should be excited in his soul at the perception of sin in his own heart, and in the conduct of others—"what carefulness" it should produce in him—"yea, what indignation, "—yea, what fear,—yea, what vehement desire, "—yea, what zeal,—yea, what revenge!" It is the law of God and man, that he "who" shedeth man's blood, by man shall "his blood be

" shed;" that " the murderer shall surely be put " to death," and that " no satisfaction shall be " taken for his life." Let the reader remember, that these statutes are in full force against sin—that he is the appointed executioner of the sentence, and that, if he let the criminal " escape, " his life shall be for the life of him."

That the punishment which man endures, how great soever it may be, is " justly" inflicted on him, no one but an atheist can confidently deny. For no other person will ascribe it to chance. And if God be its author, it must correspond with the most perfect equity of which his will is the rule. Man may err. A court of human judicature may be unjust in its decisions, through mistakes, partiality, or unrighteous principles. But " there is no unrighteousness in God." Though " clouds and darkness are round about him, righ- " teousness and judgment are the habitation of " his throne." Modern rationalists, indeed, exalt themselves into a tribunal of justice, and undertake to decide on right and wrong, acquitting or condemning according to their own notions of equity. The dogma of St. Paul, that " the wages " of sin is" eternal " death," is inconsistent with their view of vindicative retribution, and hence they infer its falsehood. But their conduct resembles that of a company of felons, who, while awaiting their trial, set up a mock-court of judicature in the jail, and anticipate the sentence of the law by determining what it ought and what it ought not to do in their respective cases. Self-interest, of course, guides the proceedings of this counterfeit judicial process; to which the judge, when the criminals are brought before him, will pay no attention.

Thus, *a priori*, we may infer the justice of that

punishment which we endure, whatever it be.—And when the sentence of the law is finally executed on the impenitent, and they are cast into hell, every mouth will be stopped, because all the world is guilty before God. But though this conclusion is irrefragable, no real humiliation will be produced in our bosoms, till we painfully discover within ourselves that which justifies God in his dealings with us, both in what he has already inflicted, and also in what he has threatened to inflict on the transgressors of his law. That "we "are justly punished for our offences," is a confession which can only flow from a broken and contrite heart. Our original sin in Adam, our natural corruption derived from him, and our actual transgressions, must be exhibited and explained to our minds by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, before we can cordially and honestly make this avowal. When this indeed is done, all or either of these considerations will sufficiently account for the punishment we suffer, and will constrain us, instead of murmuring at it, to wonder at the patience and mercy of God as therein manifested. Then the language of ancient penitents will be ours also. Then shall we adopt in sincerity the confession of Jeremiah, "The Lord is righteous; "for I have rebelled against his commandments." "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not "consumed, because his compassions fail not." "Shall a sinful man complain—a man for the "punishment of his sins?" Then shall we take up the humiliating avowal of Daniel in the name of the ancient church, which our own has in part appropriated to our use by inserting it among the sentences with which her service opens: "O Lord, "righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us "confusion of faces, as at this day.—To the Lord

" our God belongeth mercies and forgivenesses, " though we have rebelled against him. Neither " have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, " to walk in his laws which he set before us. " The Lord our God is righteous in all his works " which he doth; for we obeyed not his voice." Do we then in our hearts justify God, both in the judgments of his rod and in those of his mouth; in what he has done, and in what he has threatened to do? Can we subscribe to the declarations of Scripture, and to the confessions of our liturgy, in their full latitude of interpretation? This question will afford us a criterion of divine teaching, of genuine Christian experience, and of true conformity to the church of England.

We now proceed to consider the prayer for deliverance which follows the confession of sin in our collect.—What the blessing which we implore comprises, will appear from the review which we have taken of our situation as rendering that blessing necessary. We pray " that we who are " justly punished for our offences, may be merci- " fully delivered by God's goodness."

Do we then implore an absolute exemption from the afflictive rod of God's fatherly correction in this present life? Oh, no! our reformers were too wise to put such a petition into our mouths. And if they had been so ignorant as to insert such a request in their liturgy, no truly awakened and enlightened member of our church could have joined in it. For every duly instructed mind knows that, though " no affliction for the " present is joyous but grievous, yet it afterwards " yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to " them that are exercised thereby." Every such person remembers, that " before he was afflicted " he went wrong," and thankfully acknowledges

that " in very faithfulness God has afflicted him." He is assured that " these light afflictions which " are but for a moment, work for him a far more " exceeding and eternal weight of glory." In praying therefore for a cessation of chastisement, he would pray for a removal of his greatest blessing.

As " our offences" constitute the meritorious cause of our punishment, in the deliverance which we implore, the pardon of these must be the first object. For the cause must be removed before the effect can cease. Remission of sins therefore must precede, in the established process of divine mercy, every other gracious communication from above. The criminal must be freed from guilt by an act of grace, before his chains can be knocked off and the prison doors be thrown open. Yet how many persons wish to have the effect removed, who never think of its producing cause! They would gladly be extricated from suffering, but feel not the burden of guilt. Such ignorantly use the language of our collect. For the first object of desire to a sincere penitent is to know that there is nothing penal and vindictive in what he suffers. Suffering is in itself grievous; but the thought that it is the result of unpardoned sin, of divine displeasure, and a prelude to banishment from God, is far more bitter. This therefore is his cry, " O Lord, correct me, but with " judgment—not in thine anger, lest thou bring " me to nothing." " Enter not into judgment " with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall " no man living be justified."

The extirpation of that corruption which renders afflictions necessary to the welfare of the soul, is another object of desire, when we pray for deliverance from punishment. For the existence of corruption is itself the severest punish-

ment to a penitent sinner. He knows that the disease must be subdued, before its symptoms can rationally be expected to abate. The riches of pardoning mercy being revealed in the heart by the Holy Ghost given to us through faith in the word of God, we are assured of God's gracious design in our afflictions. We want not to have them removed, till their end is answered; but we want to have them rendered needless by a full conformity to the will of God in our souls.

We may, however, in humble submission to the will of God, pray for such a mitigation of our sufferings, as may be consistent with his glory and our own welfare. But we chiefly implore patience to bear the load, and grace to profit by it. Our Lord's cry, in his dreadful agony which he endured in the garden of Gethsemane, is a pattern for our imitation in any case that is at all similar. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from "me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou "wilt." We shall not err in supplicating for relief from sufferings, if we humbly leave the event to the divine will, and are more anxious for spiritual than for temporal mercies.

A complete deliverance from the punishment which our sins have deserved, and to which we are liable, in another world, is also in the eye of the penitent supplicant, while he uses our collect. And, lastly, he keeps also in view a deliverance from all the sad effects of sin which he now feels, by the final justification, sanctification, and glorification of his person, soul and body, at the great day of judgment.

Such then are the desires of the members of our church, while we pray "that we who are "justly punished for our offences, may mercifully "be delivered by divine goodness." Is the reader

conscious of such desires? So far as our collect may be supposed to respect a mitigation of our sufferings, a total rescue from them, and salvation from future misery, it will find many lips which can cordially adopt its language. But pardon and sanctification are the chief objects of a believer's importunate requests; and these are blessings of which it is to be feared that many nominal members of our communion do not perceive the value and importance, and after the attainment of which they feel no anxiety.

Our act of supplication is an appeal to divine mercy. We have no personal merit to plead, for we are "justly punished for our offences."—The "goodness" of the divine character enkindles hope, which the "mercy" displayed in the Gospel confirms. No unnecessary tautology appears in the petition we present. For no aggregation of words can fully express the total renunciation of self-righteousness which a contrite bosom feels. And the inspired writers have laboured for expressions, and have added term to term, for the purpose of exhibiting the riches of the grace of God. "We are justified freely by his grace*, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

The argument by which we are taught to enforce our request, is drawn from "the glory of "God's name," that is, of his divine character and perfections; for the name of God comprehends all that relates to him. God's own glory is the great end of all his dispensations. He can do nothing that would be hostile to it, that would tarnish or obscure it. Can we then demonstrate that our deliverance, in those views which we have taken of it, will be conducive to the honour

* Δωρεαν τη αυτου χαριτι.

of his name? Yes, blessed be God, we can; for the Lord hath proclaimed his name, "The Lord, "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-"suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, "transgression, and sin." But can one divine attribute be magnified at the expense of another? Certainly not; and unless we can shew that every perfection of his character will be exalted by our deliverance, our argument is futile, and the hope we build on it groundless. Can we then demonstrate that divine justice, truth and holiness, will receive glory as well as divine mercy, if our request be granted? Does he not declare that "he will by no means clear the "guilty?" Has he not said, that "the soul that "sinneth shall die?" And are we not guilty? Have we not sinned? Assuredly we have.—But, blessed be his name, the provision which he has made for the honour of his justice, holiness, and truth, in the method of grace, is so complete, that he can be "a just God, and yet a Saviour." God set forth his co-equal Son to be "a propi-"tiation through faith in his blood, to declare his "righteousness for the remission of sins that are "past, through the forbearance of God, to declare "(says the Apostle) his righteousness; that he "might be just, and yet the justifier of him that "believeth in Jesus." Thus mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, meet and kiss each other; while a lost sinner, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is pardoned, accepted, sanctified, and exalted to the right hand of God in glory everlasting. The name of the Lord will indeed be glorified by the destruction of the impenitent who reject his great salvation. But it will derive a higher degree of glory from the deliver-

ance of those who, from the depths of self-despair, call on him for help.

We urge, at the conclusion of the petition, our usual plea: for indeed we have no other which we can substitute in its stead. The name and merit of "Jesus Christ our Saviour" are our only grounds of confidence. It is only as we keep him in our view, and the expiatory punishment which was inflicted on him, that we can hope for deliverance; for it is only "through "Jesus Christ our Saviour" that the name of God can be glorified in our salvation. To hope for salvation independently of Christ, is to build our expectation on a supposition that God will degrade the character of his own moral government, and affix an eternal disgrace to the perfection of his nature. In short, it involves the absurdity of thinking that God may undeify himself to save us from perdition. The impossibility of this needs no demonstration.

We conclude with a doxology, which, while it ascribes glory to the triune Jehovah, is corroborative of our faith in presenting our petition. For if "Jesus Christ our Saviour ever liveth" to intercede for us; if he "reigneth world without "end," all power in heaven and in earth being committed to him; if he be "with the Father "and the Holy Ghost, one God," one in will as in essence, what comfortable inferences may we draw from these considerations! Then his blood must be infinitely meritorious—his grace almighty; then the Father and the Holy Ghost are equally concerned in, and engaged for, our eternal salvation, with him who died for us.—And "if God "be for us, who shall be against us?"

THE SUNDAY CALLED SEXAGESIMA, OR THE SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.

O Lord God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; mercifully grant that, by thy power, we may be defended against all adversity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHRISTIANITY is distinguished from all other systems of religion by the proposal which it makes of a vicarious righteousness, and by a prohibition of any reliance on the personal obedience of its disciples. It is their character, that they "wor-"ship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, "and have no confidence in the flesh." Various have been the schemes which fallen man has devised for the purpose of recommending himself to God; but widely as these have diverged from each other in many respects, they have all concurred in one central point, *viz.* self-righteousness. Herein the Pagan, the Turk, the infidel, the heretic, the modern Jew, and the Papist, all meet, notwithstanding the diversity of their opinions, rites and ceremonies, and their mutual antipathy to each other. Into this vortex all mankind rush to their destruction, except the few persons who are taught of God.

As the real Christian is distinguished from all other persons by his hopes and fears, his desires and aversions, his joys and sorrows, so especially by his confidence. It is placed exclusively on

divine mercy through Jesus Christ. This trait of his character creates an essential difference, not only between him and the worldling who, unconcerned about futurity, is labouring for the meat that perisheth, while that which endureth unto everlasting life is totally forgotten; but also between him and the self-justiciary, who, like the pharisee of old, trusts in himself that he is righteous. If mankind be compared to an equilateral triangle, whose base rests on the earth, while one of its angles points heavenwards, the careless and the self-righteous form the base, and though distant from each other, both cleave to the earth; while the real disciples of Christ, equi-distant from both the other classes, aspire to heaven, depending for acceptance with God on the alone merit of Jesus Christ their Lord.

That the genuine members of the church of England are thus distinguished, appears from the collect which has been recited, and which contains—a solemn appeal to divine Omniscience —and an earnest prayer to divine Omnipotence.

"Trust," in our collect, means the confidence of the heart in relation to the favour of God and everlasting salvation. The object, therefore, concerning which the appeal is made, is of the highest importance. If a man place his fortune on bad securities, and they fail, he knows the worst of his imprudence. The loss may indeed be severely felt for some days or years to come; but the moment will soon arrive when the bankrupt and the most prosperous merchant will be on an exact level. The loss of a man's property may be retrieved; or, if not, "a man's life consisteth "not in the abundance of the things which he "possesseth". If I entrust my life, when I am sick, in the hands of an unskilful physician, and

death ensue, the mischief which is done relates only to " a vapour that passeth away, and cometh " not again;" for such is our present state of existence. If I embark myself and property on board a leaky ship, and all should sink together, the loss sustained is of small consequence, compared with the loss of the soul. " For what is man " profited, if he gain the whole world and lose " his own soul; or, what shall a man give in " exchange for his soul?" This, therefore, is the deposit of value, concerning which too much care cannot be manifested in the examination of securities on which its safety is reposed, and in scrutinizing the character and ability of the trustee to whom it is confided. He is " a wise man who " builds his house upon a rock: for when the " rain descends, and the floods come, and the " winds blow, and beat upon that house, it will " not fall, because it is founded upon a rock. " But he is a foolish man, who builds his house " upon the sand: for when the rains descend, " and the floods come, and the winds blow, and " beat upon that house, it will fall, and great " will be the fall of it."

The appeal, therefore, which is made in our collect, is extremely solemn on account of its subject. But our idea of its solemnity will be heightened, when we consider to whom it is addressed. It is an appeal to Omniscience.—" O Lord God, " thou seest that we put not our trust in any " thing that we do." Divine cognizance extends to the inmost recesses of our souls: for " all " things are naked and open to the eyes of him " with whom we have to do." Let the reader consult the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, and then review this appeal to God. It is moreover made in the house of God, at the time of solemn

worship, in the presence of many witnesses, visible and invisible. O how heinous is the sin of hypocrisy under such circumstances. Let the reader consider himself as solemnly "charged "before God and the elect angels," and the congregation of the faithful, to "speak the truth, "the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

That ground of false confidence which our collect teaches us to disclaim, is very extensive. It includes not only all extrinsical human works, but moreover all the inward emotions of the soul, not excepting those which are kindled and excited by divine grace. We comprehend in this avowal not only the habits and acts of our unregenerate and unconverted state, but those also of our regenerate and converted state. "We "put not our trust in *any thing* that we do." The exercise of repentance, faith, and love, as well as the outward acts of piety and charity which we may have performed, are herein excluded from any share of our confidence in the great business of justification before God.

That the language which our church here teaches us to use is strictly proper, and that we ought not to "put our trust in any thing that "we do," is very certain. For the Scriptures speak explicitly and positively on the subject, ascribing our acceptance with God to the obedience of Christ only. To quote all the passages which bear directly or indirectly on this point, would oblige us to transcribe a great part of the New Testament; for it forms its principal theme. But a full persuasion of its truth is so important, that a reference must be made to a few. Let the latter part of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans be read with attention, and it will leave no doubt on the awakened mind. For the

inspired penman concludes from the premises he lays down, that "a man is justified by faith "without the deeds of the law." In a subsequent chapter, (Rom. xi. 6,) he shews the impossibility of that coalition which some have endeavoured to establish between works and grace in human salvation. "If it be of grace," he says, "then it "is no more of works; otherwise grace is no "more grace. But if it be of works, then it is "no more grace, otherwise work is no more "work." It is absurd, therefore, while we call ourselves Christians, to "put our trust," either wholly or partially, "in any thing that we do." In his Epistle to the Galatians, the same Apostle, speaking of himself and his believing brethren among the Jews, who might be supposed to have some personal ground of confidence though the Gentiles had none, says, "We, who are Jews by "nature and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing "that a man is not justified by the works of the "law but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we "have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be "justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the "works of the law: for by the works of the law "shall no flesh be justified." In the same divine letter he again roundly asserts, that "as many as "are of the works of the law are under the "curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one "that continueth not in all things that are "written in the book of the law to do them. "But that no man is justified by the law in the "sight of God, it is evident; for the just shall "live by faith." If a comment on these passages of Scripture be required, it is furnished in the eleventh article of our church. "We are accounted "righteous before God only for the merit of our "Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and

" not for our own works or deservings. Where-
" fore that we are justified by faith only; is a
" most wholesome doctrine, as more largely is
" expressed in the homily on justification."

From the homily intituled " A sermon of the
" salvation of mankind by only Christ our Saviour
" from sin and death everlasting," the following extract will shew what was the meaning of those excellent persons who have taught us to say, that " we put not our trust in any thing that we do."

" Because all men be sinners and offenders
" against God, and breakers of his law and com-
" mandments, therefore can no man by his own
" acts, works, and deeds, seem they never so good,
" be justified and made righteous before God; but
" every man of necessity is constrained to seek for
" another righteousness of justification, to be re-
" ceived at God's own hands, that is to say, the
" forgiveness of his sins and trespasses in such
" things as he hath offended. And this justifica-
" tion or righteousness which we so receive of God's
" mercy and Christ's merits, embraced by faith, is
" taken, accepted, and allowed of God for our
" perfect and full justification: for the more full
" understanding hereof, it is our parts and duties
" ever to remember the great mercy of God, how
" that (all the world being wrapped in sin by
" breaking of the law) God sent his only Son our
" Saviour Christ into this world to fulfil the law
" for us, and by shedding of his most precious
" blood to make a sacrifice and satisfaction, or, as
" it may be called, amends to his Father for our
" sins, to assuage his wrath and indignation
" conceived against us for the same.—This is that
" justification of righteousness which St. Paul
" speaketh of when he saith, No man is justified
" by the works of the law but freely by faith in

" Jesus Christ. And again he saith, We believe " in Jesu Christ that we be justified freely by the " faith of Christ, and not by the works of the " law, because that no man shall be justified by " the works of the law. And although this " justification be free unto us, yet it cometh not " so freely unto us, that there is no ransom paid " at all. But here may therefore man's reason be " astonished, reasoning after this fashion: if a " ransom be paid for our redemption, then it is " not given us freely? For a prisoner that paid " his ransom is not let go freely; for if he go " freely, then he goeth without ransom: for what " is it else to go freely, than to be set at liberty " without paying of ransom? This reason is " satisfied by the great wisdom of God in this " mystery of our redemption, who has so tempered " his justice and mercy together, that he would " neither by his justice condemn us into the " everlasting captivity of the devil and his prison " of hell, remediless for ever without mercy, nor " by his mercy deliver us clearly without justice " or payment of a just ransom; but with his " endless mercy he joined his most upright and " equal justice. His great mercy he shewed unto " us in delivering us from our former captivity, " without requiring of any ransom to be paid, or " amends to be made upon our parts, which thing " to us had been impossible to be done. And " whereas it lay not in us to do that, he provided " a ransom for us—that was the most precious " body and blood of his own most dear and best " beloved Son Jesu Christ, who besides this " ransom fulfilled the law for us perfectly. And " so the justice of God and his mercy did embrace " together, and fulfilled the mystery of our re- " demption. And of this justice and mercy of

" God knit together speaketh St. Paul in the third
" chapter to the Romans. All have offended and
" have need of the glory of God, but are justified
" freely by grace, by redemption which is in Jesu
" Christ, whom God hath sent forth to us for a
" reconciler and peace-maker, through faith in
" his blood, to shew his righteousness. And in
" the tenth chapter, Christ is the end of the law
" unto righteousness to every man that believeth.
" And in the eighth chapter, that which was im-
" possible by the law, inasmuch as it was weak by
" the flesh, God sending his own Son in the simi-
" litude of sinful flesh, by sin condemned sin in
" the flesh, that the righteousness of the law
" might be fulfilled in us which walk not after the
" flesh but after the Spirit. In these foresaid
" places the Apostle toucheth specially three
" things, which must go together in our justifica-
" tion. Upon God's part, his great mercy and
" grace; upon Christ's part, justice, that is, the
" satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our
" redemption, by the offering of his body and
" shedding his blood, with fulfilling of the law
" perfectly and thoroughly; and upon our part,
" true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus
" Christ, which yet is not ours, but by God's
" working in us. So that in our justification
" there is not only God's mercy and grace, but
" also his justice, which the Apostle calleth the
" justice of God, and it consisteth in paying our
" ransom and fulfilling of the law; and so the
" grace of God doth not shut out the justice of
" God in our justification, but only shutteth out
" the justice of man, that is to say, the justice of
" our works, as to be merits of deserving our
" justification. And therefore St. Paul declareth
" here nothing upon the behalf of man concerning

" his justification, but only a true and lively faith,
" which nevertheless is the gift of God, and not
" man's only work without God; and yet that
" faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love,
" dread and the fear of God to be joined with
" faith in every man that is justified; but it
" shutteth them out from the office of justifying.
" So that although they be all present together in
" him that is justified, yet they justify not alto-
" gether; neither doth faith shut out the justice
" of our good works, necessarily to be done after-
" wards of duty towards God (for we are most
" bounden to serve God in doing good deeds,
" commanded by him in his holy Scripture, all
" the days of our life:) But it excludeth them, so
" that we may not do them to this intent, to be
" made just by doing of them. For all the good
" works that we can do be imperfect, and there-
" fore not able to deserve our justification; but
" our justification doth come freely by the mere
" mercy of God; and of so great and free mercy
" that, whereas all the world was not able of
" themselves to pay any part towards their ransom,
" it pleased our heavenly Father of his infinite
" mercy, *without any of our desert or deserving*,
" to prepare for us the most precious jewels of
" Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom
" might be fully paid, the law fulfilled, and his
" justice fully satisfied. So that Christ is now
" the righteousness of all them that truly do
" believe in him. He for them paid their ransom
" by his death. He for them fulfilled the law in
" his life. So that now in him and by him every
" true Christian man may be called a fulfiller of
" the law, forasmuch as that which their infirmity
" lacked, Christ's justice has supplied."

In the second part of the homily of salvation

our reformers add—"The true understanding of "this doctrine, we be justified freely by faith "without works; or that we be justified by faith "in Christ only, is not that this our own act to "believe in Christ, or this our faith in Christ "which is within us, doth justify us, and deserve "our justification unto us (for that were to count "ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue "that is within ourselves) but the true under-"standing and meaning thereof is, that although "we hear God's word and believe it, although we "have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread and "fear of God within us, and do never so many "works thereunto, yet we must renounce the "merit of all our said virtues and good deeds, "which we either have done, shall do, or can do, "as things that be far too weak and insufficient "and imperfect to deserve remission of our sins "and our justification; and therefore we must "trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice "which our High Priest and Saviour Christ Jesus, "the Son of God, once offered for us upon the "cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and re-"mission, as well of our original sin in baptism, "as of all actual sin committed by us after our "baptism, if we truly repent and turn unfeignedly "to him again. So that as St. John Baptist, "although he were never so virtuous and godly a "man, yet, in this matter of forgiving of sin, he "did put the people from him, and appointed "them unto Christ, saying thus unto them, "Behold, yonder is the Lamb of God which "taketh away the sins of the world. Even so, "as great and as godly a virtue as the lively faith "is, yet it putteth us from itself, and remitteth "or appointeth us unto Christ, for to have only "by him remission of our sins or justification."

"So that our faith in Christ (as it were) saith "unto us thus, It is not I that take away your "sins, but it is Christ only, and to him only I "send you for that purpose, forsaking therein all "your good virtues, words, thoughts, and works, "and only putting your trust in Christ."

The extracts from the standard writings of our church, which have now been made, are long; but their importance will constitute their effectual apology. They shew us in what sense we are to use the language of our collect, by exhibiting fully the sentiments of our reformers on a subject, which, in the present day, is unhappily misunderstood and opposed by persons calling themselves Protestants, and on nearly the same ground which was taken by the Papists at the time of the Reformation.

So unbending are the requisitions of the divine law, that nothing can be admitted as a basis for acceptance under it, that has the least flaw attached to it. Now, if the quality of our best works, wrought "after justification and the grace of "Christ," be examined according to its precepts, when they are weighed in the balance of the sanctuary they will be found awfully defective. But were it otherwise, were some or all the works wrought after conversion to be sinless, or fully commensurate with the standard of perfection, they could afford no ground for trust; because the law requires, not that some only, but that all our doings, in thought, word, and deed, from the earliest dawn of reason to the close of life, be perfect. And "he that offendeth in one point is "guilty of all." It is further to be observed that, according to the constitution of the covenant of grace, a sinner must be justified by faith in Christ before he can perform any work that is radically

good. For "works, done before the grace of "Christ and inspiration of his Spirit, are not good "works." "They are all sins. And therefore "whatsoever we do before justification is so far "from justifying, that it will but more condemn "us: so far from meriting the least happiness, "that it rather deserves the greatest misery*." If therefore our trust for acceptance with God be built on any doings of our own, it must be built on works which are *altogether sinful;* for, previous to acceptance by faith in Christ, all our works are only such. This is the doctrine of our church and of the Bible. For "without" that "faith," which embraces Christ for justification, "it is impossible to please God."

The meaning of our church, then, in teaching us to say, that "we put not our trust in any "thing that we do" is evident. She excludes from any share of confidence every thing that is personally our own. Her genuine members lean, only and wholly, on the merits and satisfaction of Jesus Christ their Lord. But can we adopt her language in simplicity and godly sincerity? Let us enter into a close examination of ourselves on this momentous point, remembering that "the "heart is deceitful above all things, and des-"perately wicked: who can know it?" Let us mix earnest prayer for divine instruction with a scrutiny of our souls, knowing that it is the exclusive office of the Holy Ghost to convince the heart of its unbelief and self-righteousness. John xvi. 9. Let us remember that our collect is an appeal to Omniscience, that therein we call God to witness the truth of our asseveration. We invoke him as conscious of our sincerity. Our

* Bishop Beveridge on the Thirty-nine Articles.

negation is corroborated by an attestation of the divine Being, and has therefore the nature of an oath. If we falsify, are we not guilty of perjury? And yet, tremendous as the thought is, may we not fear that many persons make this declaration, "Lord God, thou seest that we put not our "trust in any thing that we do," while they feel no concern about the salvation of their precious souls, or are trusting in themselves for justification before God? Can the Searcher of hearts look upon me, when using this prayer, and pronounce on me the eulogy which he pronounced on Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in "whom there is no guile?" Sincerity is a correspondence between the heart and lips. Genuine churchmanship supposes a cordial communion and harmony with the sentiments of the church, as well as with her rites and ceremonies. And if a separation from the latter be schismatical, a discordance from the former is heretical. O let us then inquire, What is the basis of our hope towards God? To what do we trust for success in our addresses to the throne of grace? In the performance of good works, in what do we confide for their acceptance? In the prospect of death and of a judgment to come, on what is our affiance placed? Christ must be *exclusively* the Saviour of our souls, or he will be no Saviour to us at all. His honour will he not give to another, nor suffer his merit to be confounded with any supposed worthiness in the sinful acts of man.

The consequence therefore of putting our trust in any thing that we do, must be fatal to our eternal welfare. For it proves us to be in a state of ignorance both with respect to ourselves and God, to be entirely destitute of faith in Christ, and therefore under condemnation for our sins,

and to be disqualified for joining in the work of heaven, which is to sing, "Worthy is the Lamb "that was slain, to receive glory, and honour, "and blessing."

If it should be thought by the reader that the ellipsis in our collect may be differently filled up, and that, instead of being supplied with a view to justification before God it may more properly be completed in the following manner, "O Lord "God, who seest that we put not our trust in any "thing that we do for the purpose of defending "ourselves against all adversity, either of body or "mind,"—if this sense should be preferred, the author will not contend for his own. But he observes that these separate lines of interpretation will meet at last in the same point. For if we sincerely renounce self-confidence in one respect, we virtually renounce it in all respects. If we cannot, by our own obedience, justify ourselves before God, neither can we, by our own strength, defend ourselves from the innumerable evils to which we are exposed. This latter view of our own impotence will claim our attention in several of the succeeding collects. And the former is explicitly acknowledged by our church in the prayer that immediately precedes the consecration prayer in the communion service.

We proceed now to consider the earnest prayer to divine Omnipotence, which is founded on the foregoing appeal to divine Omniscience. It is founded on it; for there is a close connexion between the appeal and the petition. Self-diffidence is essential to the success of the application which we make to God for his protection. The act of self-renunciation is a most forcible plea, addressed to the compassion of the divine bosom. The language of distress which the Syrophœnician

woman uttered, when she applied to the divine Jesus for relief, was greatly enforced and rendered powerfully persuasive by her avowal of unworthiness. "Lord, help me," was her brief, but comprehensive prayer. "The dogs eat of the crumbs "which fall from the master's table," was the argument by which she urged her petition; which produced from the Saviour's lips high commendation of her faith, and interested his power in her behalf. If, in the same temper of mind, we can attest divine Omniscience, that "we put not our "trust in any thing that we do," we shall also succeed in our petition, and "by his power be "defended against all adversity." The act of self-renunciation accords with the appeal to mercy. Without the former, the latter would be absurd; or, at least, the latter necessarily implies the former. And as God has promised his help to those who, disclaiming self-confidence, throw themselves entirely on his mercy, the connexion between the two parts of our collect furnishes an appeal to the faithfulness of God. He has assured us, that he "will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not "despise their prayer." His glory will be eternally promoted by the exertion of his power on behalf of those who put their trust in his mercy.

But what is the request which we make?—Of what nature is the favour we implore, when we beg that God would "mercifully grant that "by his power we may be defended against all "adversity?" Is affliction adversity? Is death to be so denominated? Do we beg of God to exempt us by his power from these? Oh no: affliction and death are favourable, and not *adverse*, to the true believer. They are included in his catalogue of blessings. They are benefits derived to him from divine mercy under the

provisions of the covenant of grace. We do not therefore pray to be defended against any species of trial, nor against the attack of death.—What then do we solicit?—Our act of supplication may be explained by our Lord's prayer for his disciples, John xvii. 15. "I pray," said the compassionate Jesus, addressing himself to his Father, "I pray "not thou shouldest take them out of the world, "but that thou shouldest keep them from the "evil." He knew what was good for them, and he loved them too well not to ask the best things for them. If it were for the glory of his name, and for the good of his dear people, God could at once remove them out of the reach of trouble, without dying, as he did Enoch and Elijah. But he sees it to be better for them, and more for his own honour, that they should continue awhile in the vale of tears. When our blessed Lord, therefore, in the formulary which he drew up for the use of his church, taught us to implore God, that he would "deliver us from evil," he could not intend that we should contradict what he had instructed us to ask in a former petition, *viz.* that God's "will" might "be done in earth, as "it is done in heaven." "This is the will of "God, even our sanctification." And the method by which he chuses to carry on and to finish this great work in the souls of his people, is by affliction and death. Against the experience of these, therefore, we cannot pray for absolute defence. There is no real adversity but sin. Moral evil is the only evil from which we need to be solicitous for protection. This therefore our church teaches us to deprecate in the various circumstances of trial to which we may be exposed. If we are in a state of poverty, we are not warranted to pray for a state of opulence;

but we must beseech him, that we may be kept from the various temptations to sin which may arise from such a situation—that we may be defended against a spirit of impatience and discontent, which would prove *adverse* to the peace of our minds, to our growth in grace, and to our preparation for heavenly happiness. If we are laid on a bed of sickness, we are not authorised to pray, absolutely, for a restoration of health; but we must solicit grace that we may glorify God in the furnace of trial, and come out of it, either by recovery or death, as gold purified in the fire. Are we in a state of persecution? We are not at liberty to seek exemption from it, but that we may be defended against a murmuring and revengeful temper under it, and that we may be enabled to rejoice that we are "counted worthy "to suffer for Christ's sake." It is needless, and indeed would be impossible, to recount all the various scenes of tribulation incident to the church of God, or the dangers which are appropriate to each. It is a consolatory thought, that God knows them all, and that while we sincerely pray for defence against them, he will be our shield.

Our collect supposes a consciousness in those who use it, of utter inability to defend themselves, and to withstand the slightest temptation. They acknowledge that by grace they are saved, not only from the fear of hell, but also from the power of sin. They look to him who alone is "able to "keep them from falling, and to present them "faultless before his glory with exceeding joy."

We address the throne of grace "through "Jesus Christ our Lord." In him all our trust is reposed, for "we put none in any thing that "we do." To him we look for the acceptance of

our prayers, for the justification of our souls, for defence against all adversity, and at length for an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom. We know that our " tears need to be washed in " his blood, and that our repentances need to be " repented of*,"

* Beveridge's Private Thoughts.

THE SUNDAY CALLED QUINQUAGESIMA, OR THE NEXT SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.

O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace, and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

THE practice of converting precept into prayer, which is so frequently exemplified in our collects, manifests a spirit both of humility and faith. It bespeaks a consciousness of inability to fulfil the statutes of God without his grace, and at the same time answers the objections which unbelief is prone to raise against religion from the difficulty of its duties. For it teaches us that, although we are insufficient of ourselves to comply with the holy and blessed will of God; yet this affords no excuse for disobedience or sloth, since in Christ all fulness dwells, and humble supplicants are sure to derive from his fulness grace to help in every time of need. In our collect for Quinquagesima Sunday, which was drawn up for the use of the church in the year 1549, we are taught to pray for the communication of a particular grace to our hearts, which we are enjoined in Scripture to cultivate. "Above all "these things," says St. Paul, after having enumerated several other graces, "put on charity, "which is the bond of perfectness." Col. iii. 14.

This excellent "form of sound words" contains—a preface reciting an important article of scriptural instruction—a prayer founded on that recital—a commendation of the blessing for which we pray;—and an earnest enforcement of the request made.

The important article of scriptural instruction, which the preface recites, is taken from St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xiii. 1, &c. —a passage which is chosen for the epistle appointed to be used with our collect. Though the penman of this epistle was a man like unto ourselves, yet our collect recognises God as the author of it. It is his instruction which is recited, and is therefore to be depended on as "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation." Its truth and importance are equally indisputable. And it may therefore be introduced to the notice of the congregation in the awful style of the prophet, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word "of the Lord." "Hear, all ye people; hearken, "O earth, and let the Lord God speak, the Lord "from his holy temple."

The solemn consideration on which we found our present act of supplication is this, "that "all our doings without charity are nothing "worth." For the purpose of explaining this weighty subject, it will be requisite to shew,—What charity is—That a man may possess very brilliant gifts and endowments, may make a splendid show of benevolence towards men, nay, exhibit in his conduct a striking semblance of piety towards God, and yet be destitute of charity—and that gifts, outward acts of benevolence to man, or of piety to God, are of no value whatever without charity.

A solution of the question, What is charity, is

a matter of high importance, for the term is frequently misunderstood; and thousands, through misconceptions of the subject, have been deceived to their eternal ruin. The word *charity* is synonymous with *love*. The Greek term used in the New Testament is sometimes rendered charity and sometimes love. It is to be lamented, that the same word has not been always employed by our translators, as thereby mistakes might have been prevented; and that *love*, as the more intelligible term to common readers, had not been chosen.

The nature of this grace* will appear from another branch of the standard writings belonging to the church of England, namely, her homilies, one of which is intituled, "A sermon of Christian "love and charity." Now, as the same persons wrote both the homily and the collect, the former being dated but thirteen years after the latter, the meaning of our church in the word cannot be mistaken if we adopt the definition of the homily.

"Of all things that be good to be taught unto "Christian people, there is nothing more neces- "sary to be spoken of and daily called upon than "charity, as well for that all manner of works of "righteousness be contained in it, as also that "the decay thereof is the ruin or fall of the world, "the banishment of virtue and the cause of vice. "And forasmuch as almost every man maketh

* Αγαπη εστι διαθεσις ψυχης αγαθη, est animi bonus affectus, quo efficitur ut nihil Deo præferat.—*Maxim.* 1. *Centur. Sentent.* tom. 7. Et *Prosper:* Charitas est recta voluntas ab omnibus terrenis aversa, et Deo inseparabiliter unita, ab igne quodam Spiritus Sancti incensa.—Quoted by Bishop Davenant in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Colossians; who in another place says, Est virtus divinitus infusa, quâ sincere diligitur propter se Deus, et propter Deum proximus.

" and frameth to himself charity after his own
" appetite, and how detestable soever his life be
" both unto God and man, yet he persuadeth
" himself still that he hath charity; therefore you
" shall hear now a true and plain description or
" setting forth of charity, not of man's imagina-
" tion, but of the very words and example of our
" Saviour Jesus Christ. In which description
" or setting forth, every man, as it were in a
" glass, may consider himself and see plainly
" without error, whether he be in the true charity
" or not.

" Charity is love to God with all our heart, all
" our souls, and all our power and strength.
" With all our heart: that is to say, that our
" heart, mind and study be set to believe his
" word, to trust in him, and to love him above
" all other things that we love best in heaven or
" in earth. With all our life: that is to say,
" that our chief joy or delight be set upon him
" and his honour, and our whole life given to the
" service of him above all things, with him to
" live and die, and to forsake all other things
" rather than him; for he that loveth his father
" or mother, son or daughter, house or land, more
" than me, saith Christ, (Matt. x.) is not worthy
" to have me. With all our power: that is to say,
" that with our hands and feet, with our eyes
" and ears, our mouths and tongues, and with all
" our parts and powers both of body and soul,
" we should be given to the keeping and fulfilling
" of his commandments. This is the first and
" principal part of charity; but it is not the whole.
" For charity is also to love every man good and
" evil, friend and foe; and whatsoever cause be
" given to the contrary, yet nevertheless to bear
" good will and heart unto every man, to use our-

" selves well unto them, as well in words and " countenances, as in all our outward acts and " deeds. For so Christ himself taught, and so also " he performed indeed. Of the love of God he " taught on this wise unto a doctor of the law " that asked him which was the chief and great " commandment of the law. Love thy Lord God, " saith Christ, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, " and with all thy mind. And of the love that " we ought to have among ourselves, each to other, " he teacheth us thus. ' You have heard it taught " in times past, Thou shalt love thy friend, and " hate thy foe. But I tell you, love your enemies, " speak well of them that defame and speak evil " of you, do well to them that hate you, pray for " them that vex and persecute you, that you may " be the children of your Father that is in " heaven," &c. " Thus have I set before you " what charity is,——whereby every man may " without error know himself, what state and " condition he standeth in, whether he be in " charity and so the child of the Father in " heaven or not. For although almost every " man persuadeth himself to be in charity, yet " let him examine none other man, but his own " heart, his life and conversation, and he shall not " be deceived, but truly discern and judge, whether " he be in perfect charity or not. For he that " followeth not his own appetite and will, but " giveth himself earnestly to God, to do all his will " and commandments, he may be sure that he " loveth God above all things, and else surely he " loveth him not, whatsoever he pretend. As " Christ said, If ye love me, keep my command- " ments; for he that knoweth my commandments " and keepeth them, he it is, saith Christ, that " loveth me. And again he saith (John xiv.) he

"that loveth me will keep my words, and my "Father will love him, and we will both come to "him and dwell with him: And he that loveth "me not, will not keep my words. And like- "wise he that beareth a good heart and mind, "and useth well his tongue and deeds unto every "man, friend and foe, he may know thereby that "he hath charity. And then he is sure that "Almighty God taketh him for his dearly be- "loved son, as St. John saith. (1 John iii.) Hereby "manifestly are known the children of God and "the children of the devil: for whosoever doth "not love his brother, belongeth not unto God."

It may be necessary to remind the reader, before we proceed, that "most excellent" as "the "gift of charity" is, it is not the principle of justification. But as this point is fully proved in the preceding Essay, it will be needless to resume the argument. That our most exalted love is imperfect, needs no other demonstration than the prayer which we are taught to use for its increase. And that which is imperfect itself requires forgiveness, instead of justifying the person in whom it is found. The righteousness of Christ is the sole cause of acceptance with God, and faith the exclusive instrument of its application to the heart.

Faith, hope, and charity, are however inseparably connected, so that wherever either of these graces is found, the others exist also: and the vigour of the two latter is always proportioned to the vigour of the former. "Faith believes the "revelations of God; hope expects his promises; "charity loves his excellencies and mercies*." Faith therefore is the cause; hope and love the

* Taylor.

effects which it produces. That is the parent, these the children. A general and historical faith may exist without love. But a justifying faith, which, preceded by conviction of sin, apprehends and applies the merit of Christ for pardon and salvation, necessarily begets charity*, " the final

* That genuine faith is not necessarily productive of love and good works, was one of the errors of Popery on account of which the church of England separated from the see of Rome. This error has however been maintained by some modern divines, although the church of England in her articles and homilies is directed against them. The twelfth article and the whole of the first part of the homily on faith is on this subject. Bishop Jewel, in his "Apology for the Church of England," also says, chap. 2. § 23, "The true "faith is a living faith, and *cannot* be idle." Bishop Davenant, another luminary of the Reformation, in his exposition of the Epistle to the Colossians, reasons thus on the subject:—" Concedimus posse mentem hominis ita illustrari, " ut credat Deo; id est, ut assentiatur verbo divino in genere, " et tamen interim sit expers charitatis; hanc *fidem informem* " appellant Scholastici, nos *fidem historicam*, sive *fidem* " *generalem*. Sic Antissiodorensis perantiquus Scholasticus, " lib. 3:—*Fide informi credimus Deo; id est, quod sit Deus,* " *et quod Deus sit omnipotens, et multa alia.* De hoc etiam " loquitur Jacobus, cap. ii. 14:—*Quid prodest, si fidem quis* " *dicat se habere, opera autem non habeat?* Deinde paulo " post; *Diaboli credunt et contremiscunt.* Sed est alia etiam " fides, quam nos *justificantem* appellamus, Scholastici *formalem;* quæ non solum credit Deo, sed in Deum, id est, quæ " apprehendit Deum, ut sibi placatum et reconciliatum in " Christo; atque hanc dicimus nunquam sejungi a charitate. " Prior est simplex irradiatio, non virtus theologica; hæc " posterior est primaria inter tres illas celebres theologicas " virtutes. Hujus autem nexus perpetuus cum charitate " probatur multis rationibus. 1. Quia hæc fides Deum " apprehendit ut bonum et misericordem et salutis authorem " sibi per Christum; at hæc apprehensio parit amorem Dei " necessario; sic enim Antissiodorensis, *Æstimatio quâ* " *aliquis æstimat per fidem Deum esse summum bonum suum,* " *generativa est desiderii illius boni,* lib. 3. 2. Quia fides " justificans sanctificat et purificat corda; at cor expers " charitatis non est sanctificatum aut purificatum. 3. Quia " omnis qui credit verâ fide et justificante, habet jus ad

"object whereof is that incomprehensible beauty, "which shineth in the countenance of Christ, the "Son of the living God*." Charity, however, is not of the essence of faith; for faith precedes and produces love, and works by it†.

"vitam æternam. Sic enim Baptista, *Qui credit Filio, "habet vitam æternam.* Et Paulus ad Galatas, *Omnes filii "Dei estis per fidem.* Sed hæc nemini competunt qui est "expers charitatis. 4. Ipsi scholastici docent, tres illas "virtutes theologicas semper esse connexas, &c. &c. Ex his "patet, cum Papistæ disputant veram fidem posse a charitate "sejungi, illos vel ambiguitate vocabuli ludere, vel suis "scholasticis repugnare. Fides enim illa, quæ est expers "charitatis, differt specie ab hâc justificante; hæc enim est "virtus theologica, illa non est: differunt objecto; hæc "enim Deum sibi in Christo reconciliatum apprehendit, "illa non potest apprehendere: differunt effectibus; hæc "enim pacem conscientiæ affert, illa timorem: differunt "actibus; hujus enim actus est credere in Deum, illius est "tantum credere Deo, ut antea ostendimus." The dispute which has arisen on this subject, will apologize for the length of this extract.

* Hooker.

† "Restat ultima quæstio, quæ spectat ad fidem et chari- "tatem: scilicet an charitas sit ita conjuncta cum fide, ut sit "forma fidei? Sic videtur Thomæ, Durando, et aliis re- "censioribus. Imaginantur enim fidem per se esse quiddam "mortuum et inanime; et quicquid vitæ vel meriti habeat, "illud mutuari a charitate tanquam ab animâ et formâ suâ. "At contra pugnat (quem sæpe nominavi) Antissiodorensis, "lib. 3, ubi defendit, fidem veram et formatam esse naturâ "priorem charitate. *Ratio* 1:—*Justus ex fide vivit:* ergo ex "fide diligit; ergo fides viva est prior naturâ quam charitas, "et proinde non formatur et vivificatur a charitate. *Ratio* "2, ex 1 Timoth. i. 5:—*Finis mandati est charitas ex puro "corde, fide et non fictâ;* ergo vera fides, et cor purificans, "parit charitatem: et per consequens non est formata a cha- "ritate. *Ratio* 3:—Motus fidei formatæ præcedit motum "charitatis; ergo ipse habitus fidei formatæ naturâ præcedit "habitum charitatis. Nam prius in Deum credimus, et "fidem nostram reponimus, quam illum amare possumus. "*Ratio* 4, ex Apostolo ad Galatas:—*In Christo Jesu neque "circumcisio valet, neque præputium, sed fides, quæ per "dilectionem operatur;* ergo fides est efficiens causa chari-

We now proceed to shew that a man may possess many brilliant gifts, make a splendid shew of benevolence towards men, and of piety towards God, and yet be destitute of charity. The possibility of this awful defect, as supposed in our collect, is founded on what St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xiii. 1–3:—"Though I speak with the tongues of "men and of angels, and have not charity, I am "become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and "understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and "though I have all faith, so that I could remove "mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the "poor, and though I give my body to be burned, "and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue,
Than ever man pronounc'd or angel sung;
Had I all knowledge, human and divine,
That thought can reach, or science can define;
And had I power to give that knowledge birth
In all the speeches of the babbling earth;
Did Shadrack's zeal my glowing breast inspire,
To weary tortures, and rejoice in fire;
Or had I faith like that which Israel saw,
When Moses gave them miracles and law,
Yet, gracious CHARITY, indulgent guest!
Were not thy power exerted in my breast,
Those speeches would send up unheeded pray'r,
That scorn of life would be but wild despair;
A cymbal's sound were better than my voice;
My faith were form, my eloquence were noise.

Prior.

"tatis, et proinde charitas non est forma fidei, sed filia vel "famula."—*Davenant in Epist. ad Coloss.* How fast we are hastening back to Rome, the reader may judge by comparing these extracts with some specimens of modern divinity. O how little did the good Bishop think, when he quoted the school-authors against the Papists, that a time would arrive when it would be necessary to quote himself, on the very same points, against some divines of his own Protestant church!

The Apostle's mode of speaking evidently supposes the possibility of a man's possessing all those extraordinary and miraculous endowments which were conferred on the members of the primitive church, while, nevertheless, he remained destitute of charity. It is however to be observed, that the faith of which he speaks is the faith of miracles, and not a justifying faith; for the latter is never separate from charity. It does not appear that Judas was, in any miraculous power, inferior to the other Apostles; for such defect would have stigmatised him before the time arrived for the discovery of his true character.—But no spark of charity was ever kindled in the traitor's bosom. He lived as he died, "sensual, not having the "Spirit." The Corinthian church, which was abundantly favoured with gifts, most probably contained many persons who were destitute of saving grace, for whose conviction and conversion this awful declaration of the Apostle, though modestly couched for the purpose of avoiding offence in the first person, was intended. It is a most awakening consideration to which our collect calls attention. A man may be learned, may pray fluently, and preach eloquently, and yet be a reprobate for want of charity. O how superior in value is a grain of that "faith which worketh "by love" to the most splendid attainments without it! The latter may indeed most highly recommend their possessor to the approbation and admiration of men, but the former is essential to a participation in the favour of God and in the happiness of his kingdom.

The Apostle, moreover, supposes it to be a possible thing for a man to bestow all his fortune in the relief of the poor, and yet be destitute of genuine charity, or a divine principle of love to God and man. It may be difficult to account for

so uncommon an act on any human motives. But pride and ostentation, or the emotions of a naturally compassionate temper, may produce such an effect, and, without doubt, have sometimes produced it. The voluntary poverty so highly estimated in the Romish church, frequently, if not generally, originated in corrupt motives. Nor is the alms-giving of Protestants always of an unsuspicious nature. It is very necessary that we should closely scrutinize our motives, since an outwardly similar line of conduct may arise from different, nay, from diametrically opposite inducements. For as the summer's sun and the winter's frost both subserve the traveller's accommodation, by drying up the roads and rendering his journey safe and pleasant; so may the benefit of others and the good of society be promoted by the frigid act of mere nature, while the doer is wholly unblessed in his deed, as well as by the genial influence of divine grace on the heart. But a supposition still more extraordinary is stated by St. Paul in the before-cited passage of his epistle to the Corinthians. A submission to martyrdom in defence of our creed seems to be the highest act of piety that can be performed, and the strongest proof of sincerity which can be given. Yet this semblance of piety may exist without charity. Pride, vain-glory, or an obstinate attachment to opinions from which no sanctifying efficacy is derived, may produce this effect also. We have therefore read of heathens, of Jews, of Turks, of infidels, and of heretics, as well as of Christians, who have sacrificed their lives in support of their religious systems. And it is by no means certain that all who have suffered in the cause of Christianity were real Christians. Other proof is necessary besides a submission to martyrdom.

Perhaps many of those whose names are recorded in the calendar of supposed saints, will not be found numbered in "the holy army of martyrs" who will praise God in his eternal kingdom. But to an inquiry of this kind the Searcher of hearts is alone competent. "Charity hopeth all things." The use which we are to make of the Apostle's awful supposition is of a personal nature. Is "the "love of God shed abroad in *our* hearts by the "Holy Ghost given unto *us?*" It is easier to sacrifice every thing, even life itself, than to give up the heart to God in the bond of divine charity. —Nature may do the former, but grace only can enable us to do the latter.

"All our doings without charity are nothing "worth." For "if any man," says our Apostle, "love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Ana-"thema Maranatha," accursed till the Lord come. And when he comes many will say to him, "Lord, "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and "in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy "name done many wonderful works? To whom "he will profess, I never knew you: depart from "me, ye that work iniquity."

No works of ours, even though they spring from love to God and man, can be of a propitiatory nature; for after we have done all that is required of us, and in the best possible manner, we are still unprofitable servants. Our works, moreover, are utterly useless for the purpose of recommending us to the divine favour; they are neither needed nor qualified for this office. Good works are however the necessary fruits of faith, and evidences of justification: they are essential requisites to an admission to the kingdom of God, not as the procuring but as a qualifying cause.— But works which do not spring from love or

charity afford no evidence of a justified state, nor do they prepare for the enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance. Nay, "forasmuch as they are not "done as God hath willed and commanded them "to be done, they have the nature of sin," are proofs of a carnal mind, and prepare for eternal vengeance. Add, then, dear reader,

> Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,
> And virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
> ——————————— THE SOUL
> OF ALL THE REST. *Milton.*

O what an awful day will the day of judgment prove! The motives of action will then be exhibited to open view. And oh! how many builders of hospitals and endowers of alms-houses, it is to be feared, will be found destitute of love to God! How large a part of that piety, which is so much admired in the world, will be set aside as "nothing worth!" May the thought hereof produce "great searchings of heart."

Important beyond description are right notions of religious truth. The world talks with great volubility of tongue concerning candour and liberality of sentiment—terms which, in their lips, are synonymous with indifference to vital godliness. But they are terms which, when applied to the Gospel, are absurd and blasphemous. For there certainly is a system of divine truth. We must acknowledge it, or avow ourselves the disciples of Voltaire or Spinoza, the patrons of deism or atheism. And if there be a system of divine truth, its divinity gives to it an importance which renders liberality of sentiment concerning it irrational and impious. "Charity rejoiceth in "the truth," and is perfectly consistent with a manful contention "for the faith once delivered

"to the saints." Thereon the manifestative glory of God, the present comfort and holiness, and the eternal salvation of the human soul, depend. But as genuine religion doth not consist in outward form and ceremony, so neither doth it consist in a speculative system of opinions, however orthodox, but in a conformity of will and affection to God, produced by "the truth as it is "in Jesus." It may be characterised by a single word. It is CHARITY, for which we are taught to pray in the collect which is now the subject of contemplation.

That the greatest fervor of spirit in the use of this prayer becomes us, is evident both from the nature of the blessing implored, and from the fatal consequences of being destitute of it. It is *the one thing needful;* for it is the proof of justification, the essence of sanctification, and the qualification for eternal glory. If we use this prayer with indifference, and without earnest desire after the attainment of heaven-born charity, O how ignorant must we be of our own state, and how unconcerned about our own happiness! and how clear is the evidence, that "all our doings "are nothing worth!"

But in what manner are we taught to expect this "most excellent gift?" This question is solved by the language of our collect; for we beg that God would send "his Holy Ghost." It is his office, in the covenant of grace, to quicken, comfort, and "sanctify all the elect people of "God." Therein he acts in subserviency to the Father and the Son, by revealing the love of the former and the merit of the latter, and he is therefore called the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. But when we speak of his mission, we do not thereby refer to any change of place, for

loco-motion cannot be attributed to an omnipresent Being; but it is the communication of his sanctifying influence which we solicit. His grace is essential to salvation in every stage of the work on our hearts. We are naturally destitute of it—; are "sensual, not having the Spirit;" and therefore "in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good "thing." For from him "all holy desires, all "good counsels, and all just works proceed."

That charity, or the love of God and of our neighbour for God's sake, is not a natural inmate of our bosoms, is plain both from Scripture and experience. The former tells us that "the carnal "mind is enmity against God;" and the page of history draws the character of mankind as "ene-"mies to God by wicked works," and as "hateful "and hating one another." The Bible uniformly ascribes the love of God and man to a supernatural source; to which, if we would possess it, we must diligently repair. And as its first production is from the operation of God the Holy Ghost, so also its subsequent growth to perfection. Our church is therefore fully justified in teaching all her members, whether babes or fathers in Christ, to pray for the Holy Ghost, in order that they may be enabled to love God and love their brother also.

We may here properly remark the doctrine of our church respecting divine inspiration. The utmost consistency on the subject prevails in all her offices. If she cannot enforce uniformity by the persuasive arguments she uses, on all her children, it shines beautifully in herself. While therefore some of her sons assert that "the "thoughts of the human heart must be cleansed "by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit," in order that they may "perfectly love God and worthily "magnify his holy name," they have maternal

authority on their side; and if they sink under the obloquy of enthusiasm, the church must sink together with them.

The end for which we pray that the Holy Ghost may be sent to us, is a most important one. It is that, in consequence of his inspiration, "the "most excellent gift of charity" may be poured into our hearts; that we may be endued with love to God, ourselves, and our neighbours. An uninspired sinner is an enemy to God, to himself, and to all around him. And if, through a measure of grace received, we can adopt St. Peter's solemn declaration, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou "knowest that I love thee," then we implore, that the spark of divine charity which has been already kindled may be fanned into a flame, may consume whatever is contrary to its own holy nature, and burn for ever to the praise of the glory of its great author and object.

The measure of divine love for which we pray, is not a scanty one. We ask not that it may only be dropped upon us, or sprinkled around us, but that it may be "poured into our hearts." The believing sinner longs that the holy oil which has been poured on his head may flow down to the very skirts of his garment, that it may consecrate all his thoughts, tempers, words, and actions, and that he may be "filled with all the fulness of "God," who "is" himself "love;" in which "whosoever dwelleth, dwelleth in God, and God in "him." The man who has tasted that the Lord is gracious cannot be satisfied till love becomes the element of his soul, the grand constituent principle of his being, the surrounding atmosphere in which he lives and moves and acts.

But is this indeed the desire of all those persons who mingle in our congregations and who say

"Amen" to our collect? It is the desire of all the true members of our church. But is it yours, reader, and mine? Have we been awakened to a consciousness of the natural enmity of our hearts to God? Do we mourn on account of our want of love to him who is both our Creator and our Redeemer? Do we appreciate our obligations to him at so high a rate, as to perceive that our returns can never be commensurate with them? Do we feel our own inability to excite in our souls that divine temper which is the very essence of heaven, and the only preparative for glory?

Our collect proceeds to exhibit the characteristic excellence of divine charity; and as the commendation of it is strictly scriptural, it must be strictly just.

Charity is properly denominated a "most ex- "cellent gift." For such it will indeed appear to be, whether we consider its origin as from God, who is himself love; its object, him in whom all excellencies meet; or its end, the perfect happiness of rational and immortal creatures; for love is paradise restored, heaven begun here, and perfected hereafter. If we compare it with the other graces, its excellence is unequalled; for St. Paul gives it a decided preference both to faith and hope. *These* are means, *that* the end proposed by them. *These* are mortal, *that* immortal. *These* calculated only for this transitory world of sin and sorrow, *that* intended to flourish and bring forth its choicest fruits in the unchanging climes of bliss. *These* solace the pilgrim on his way through the wilderness, but *that* will afford him repose at its termination.

Each proper gift, which God on man bestows,
Its proper bounds and due reflection knows,
To one fixt purpose dedicates its pow'r,
And, finishing its act, exists no more.

Thus, in obedience to what heaven decrees,
Knowledge shall fail, and prophecy shall cease;
But lasting charity's more ample sway,
Not bound by time, nor subject to decay,
In happy triumph shall for ever live,
And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive:
As through the artist's intervening glass,
Our eye observes the distant planets pass,
A little we discover, but allow
That more remains unseen than art can shew.
So whilst our mind its knowledge would improve,
(Its feeble eye intent on things above)
High as we may, we lift our reason up,
By FAITH directed, and confirm'd by HOPE;
Yet we are able only to survey
Dawnings of beams and promises of day.
Heaven's fuller effluence mocks our dazzled sight,
Too great its swiftness, and too strong its light.
But soon the mediate clouds shall be dispell'd:
The sun shall soon be, face to face, beheld
In all his robes, with all his glory on,
Seated sublime on his meridian throne.
Then constant FAITH and holy HOPE shall die,
One lost in certainty, and one in joy;
Whilst thou, more happy pow'r, fair CHARITY,
Triumphant sister, greatest of the three!
Thy office and thy nature still the same,
Lasting thy lamp, and unconsumed thy flame;
Shalt still survive ——————————
Shalt stand before the host of heav'n confest,
For ever blessing, and for ever blest. *Prior.*

With a reference to the language of St. Paul in Eph. iv. 3, our collect proceeds to extol charity as "the very bond of peace." It is the cause and cement of union between the children of God; who, "maintaining the truth in love, "grow up into him in all things, which is the "head, even Christ; from whom the whole body "fitly joined together, and compacted by that "which every joint supplieth, according to the "effectual working in the measure of every part, "maketh increase of the body unto the edifying "of itself in love." Among the children of this

world, there are as many separate interests as there are individuals; self-aggrandizement, in some shape or other, being the object of each. But among the genuine members of the church it is not so; or, at least it is not so if charity *prevail* among them. For it is the office of Christian love to dethrone the idol self, that Christ may be all in all. Those therefore who are endowed with this most excellent gift have "one heart and one way." "There is one body "and one spirit, even as they are called in one "hope of their calling. One Lord, one faith, one "baptism, one God and Father of all, who is "above all, and through all, and in them all." Where divine love is in exercise, there can be no jarring interests, no suspicious jealousies, nor divisions. For "as the body is one and hath "many members, and all the members of that "one body, being many, are one body, so also is "Christ. And whether one member suffer, all "the members suffer with it—or one member be "honoured, all the members rejoice with it." Charity is "the very bond of peace."

> Soft peace she brings wherever she arrives,
> She builds our quiet as she forms our lives,
> Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
> And opens in each heart a little heaven. *Prior.*

Charity is moreover characterised as "the "bond of all virtues." In this part of the description the collect seems to allude to Col. iii. 14, where this grace is called "the bond of perfect-"ness*." It is so denominated, because where

* Charitas est vinculum perfectionis inter ipsas virtutes, quia qui charitatem habet, reliquas omnes habet et exercet. Huc spectant illa Scripturæ loca, Rom. xiii. 8, *Qui diligit proximum, legem implevit*: et ad Galat. v. 14;—*Omnis lex in*

love exists all other graces exist also. "He that "loveth, hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou "shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, "Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false "witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there "be any other commandment, it is briefly com- "prehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy "neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to "his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of "the law." Rom. xiii. 8, 9. See also Gal. v. 14; and 1 Tim. i. 5. And as the duties of the second table are all comprehended in the word LOVE, so also are those of the first; for love to God includes the whole of our duty to him. For thus said the divine Lawgiver, Matt. xxii. 37, &c. "Thou "shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, "and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. "This is the first and great commandment. And "the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy "neighbour as thyself. On these two command- "ments hang all the law and the prophets." As, therefore, when the blood in a sick patient begins to circulate freely, and the pulse beats regularly, the body approximates to health; so, when love circulates freely in all our spirit and conduct, the convalescence of the fallen soul may be ascertained also. But oh! how feeble and irregular is the pulse of our souls! How small the indications of returning health! "Lord, "send thy Holy Ghost and pour into our hearts

uno sermone impletur, diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum. Hinc Cyprianus, *In amore omnium Scripturarum volumina coarctantur; in hoc invenit consummationem omnis religio.* Dicitur itaque vinculum perfectionis, quia conjungit et copulat inter se omnium virtutum officia, ita ut ubicunque vera charitas sit, ibi etiam reperiatur integrum corpus et quasi concatenatio omnium virtutum.——*Davenant, in Epist. ad Coloss.*

"that most excellent gift of charity, the very "bond of peace and of all virtues!"

We need not wonder at the awful declaration which is added to the foregoing eulogy, that "whosoever liveth is counted dead before God," if destitute of charity. For faith, which is the instrument of the spiritual life of justification, is constantly productive of love, and can have no existence without it. And love is itself the principle of the spiritual life of holiness,—"without "which no man can see the Lord." As the body without the spirit therefore is dead, so faith, the historical assent given to Scripture by the empty professor, is dead also, because it is unaccompanied with those works which love to God and man dictates. How awful is the state of those who "have a name to live, but are dead!"

Well therefore may we again enforce our request for this excellent gift of charity, by saying, "Grant this for Jesus Christ's sake." In such an employment as that to which our collect calls us, lukewarmness is folly, indifference insanity. O that the considerations which have been stated may be a means of stirring up both the reader and the writer of these pages to an earnestness of importunity which, backed by the divine Saviour's name and merits, may succeed in obtaining for both this inestimable benefit! Amen.

THE FIRST DAY OF LENT, COMMONLY CALLED ASH WEDNESDAY.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE days of Lent, of which Ash Wednesday is the first, are designed to be preparatory to the observance of the approaching festival of Easter. The origin of this annual fast is of high antiquity; for "Irenæus, who lived but ninety years from "the death of St. John, and conversed familiarly "with St. Polycarp, as Polycarp had with St. "John, has happened to let us know, though "incidentally, that as it was observed in his time, "so it was in that of his predecessors*." The institution appears to have originated in the preparation which was made by the Jews for the great day of atonement, previous to which they are said to have observed a season of forty days humiliation.

The first day of Lent is called *Ash Wednesday*, in allusion to a custom which prevailed in the primitive church of sprinkling ashes on the heads of penitents before their re-admission to the

* Wheatly.

communion at Easter. To this custom the preface of the Commination service refers, wherein we are reminded, that "in the primitive church there "was a godly discipline, that, at the beginning "of Lent, such persons as stood convicted of "notorious sin, were put to open penance, and "punished in this world that their souls might be "saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, "admonished by their example, might be the "more afraid to offend."

The collect for Ash Wednesday was composed at the Reformation, and contains,—a preface declaratory of the divine character—a request founded on it—and the end proposed by that request.

The preface consists of two parts which are closely connected with each other, and both relate to the character of him with whom the penitent sinner has to do in the great concern of his salvation. The former part of the description is more general, the latter more confined and yet more consolatory to a contrite heart.

The members of our church are supposed to be, at this season, more deeply impressed and affected by a conviction of their sinfulness and demerit than is common even with awakened sinners. They are supposed to have engaged in the necessary work of self-examination, and to have found the result of it very humiliating. It is taken for granted that, when they look forward to the great day of expiation shortly to be commemorated, their sins which occasioned so great a sacrifice, appear with a deeply crimson hue. In such a state of mind there is no small danger of discouragement and despair. Indeed desperation is inevitable, unless the soul be relieved by those views of divine mercy which the

Gospel presents. The preface of our collect is therefore designed to obviate this danger, and to encourage the mourner in his approach to the throne of grace.

That God "hateth nothing that he hath "made," is clear from his own positive declarations confirmed by an inviolable oath. "As "I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure "in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked "turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye "from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O "house of Israel?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11. If an objection to this declaration should be founded on the many passages of Scripture which speak of the wrath of God as revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness; if it should be said, that "all "that do unrighteously are *an abomination* to "the Lord," (Deut. xxv. 16,) that he *hateth* all "the workers of iniquity," (Psalm v. 5;) that God has declared that it is "*in his desire* to "chastise" the wicked, that he "*rejoices over*" the impenitent "to destroy them," (Deut. xxviii. 63;) the answer to it is easy. As his creature, God "hateth nothing that he has made." The cause of his displeasure is superadded to his work; and though the moral government of God, and the glory of his holiness, justice, and truth, peremptorily require that he should execute vengeance on incorrigible sinners, yet penal evil, as such, is not desirable to the divine mind, because it is connected with the destruction of his own work. However dear his creatures, as such, may be to him, the honour of his own most holy name is dearer*. This subject is, however, one of the

* It assuredly could not be the design of the compilers of our Liturgy to assert, in an universal and unqualified sense,

deep things of God, into which it behoves us to look with holy awe without seeking to be wise above what is written. We shall therefore hasten to the consideration of a point which is less embarrassed, after that we have observed the evidence which arises to prove that God hateth not *us*—from our continuance in life, when he might have cut us down, and assigned us our portion in outer darkness long ago; from the gift of his dear Son to atone for our sins, although he was under no obligation to provide a ransom; from the promise which he has made of his Holy Spirit to all that ask him; from the means of grace, which we so richly enjoy in his word and ordinances; from the exhortations, promises, and even threatenings, of his word; from the various paternal chastisements with which from time to time we have been visited. Each of these topics will afford to us sufficient demonstration of God's good will towards us. And in whatever difficulty the divine procedure with the devils and the

that God hateth no rational being which he hath made; because such a notion is confuted by the case of devils, and damned human spirits that are departed this life. But no creature whatever can possibly be the object of his hatred, considered merely as his creature, and so long as it continues to be what it was made and intended to be. But sin, the very moment that it attaches to any intelligent creature, excites his invariable disgust. And yet, when we reflect on the extensive benefits which flow from the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and especially the riches of divine forbearance, it may not perhaps be strictly just to assert, that God hates any human sinner, so long as he is pleased to continue him in a state of probation on this side of eternity. The words of St. Peter (2 Epistle, iii. 9) are very strong and expressive. And, though we may not be able to unravel the difficulty with which they seem to be clogged, yet they must be strictly true, and capable of being explained in a sense that is perfectly consistent with all the divine attributes.

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heathen world may be involved (for the former of whom no ransom was provided, and to the latter of whom no Saviour has been revealed); it is enough for us to know, (for we have nothing to do with his conduct towards others) that he willeth not our death, and that our destruction, should we perish, will be wholly of ourselves.

The second branch of the preface of our collect is more confined, but still more decisive and comfortable. God "forgives the sins of all them "that are penitent." This subject is beautifully illustrated by the parables of the lost sheep and of the prodigal son. In the former of these the good shepherd is represented as seeking with tender anxiety his wandering sheep until he find them; and, in the latter, the Father of mercies is introduced as running to meet his lost son, so soon as ever a penitent desire is formed in his bosom of returning to his parent's house. But it is not from parables only that we gather instruction on this pleasing topic. The statement of our collect is exemplified in innumerable cases, which are not scenical, but real matters of fact. The sins of David were very heinous, and, considering the privileges he had enjoyed, the mercies he had received, and the station he held in the church, it is scarcely possible to conceive any thing more provoking to the majesty of God. But God "forgives the sins of all them that are "penitent;" for no sooner did the criminal confess, with penitential compunction, "I have sin-"ned," than the divinely-commissioned Prophet replied, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; "thou shalt not die." 1 Sam. xii. 13. The history of Manasseh affords another instance of the like kind. He had been guilty of every abomination which the Lord hateth. He had committed the

grossest idolatries, and the most cruel murders. and "wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord "to provoke him to anger." He was not only a daring transgressor himself, but he employed his regal authority to make others also to sin. It is impossible to read the thirty-third chapter of the second book of Chronicles without being astonished at the patience and long-suffering of God. At length, after repeated warnings, which this monster of iniquity neglected and despised, "the "Lord brought on him the captains of the host "of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh "among the thorns (probably in some *thicket*, "where he had concealed himself from pursuit), "and bound him with fetters, and carried him "to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he "sought the Lord his God, and humbled himself "greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed "unto him; and he was entreated of him, and "heard his supplication, and brought him again "to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manas-"seh knew that the Lord he was God." To these Old Testament accounts we may add from the New, that no sooner did a sinful woman, whose iniquities had been many, present herself at the feet of the compassionate Jesus, in the house of Simon the Pharisee, than Jesus said unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven." But where is the necessity of multiplying proofs that God forgives the sins of all them that are penitent, since the witnesses constitute a great multitude, which no man can number. Heaven teems with them, and earth is constantly adding to the number. No penitent soul ever failed of obtaining a place among those who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Nor does hell, among all its myriads of wretched prisoners, contain one contrite bosom.

The comfortable assertion of our collect being perfectly established, it remains only that we inquire what penitence is. On this subject our church shall speak for herself; for the homily of repentance will be the best interpreter of her meaning, when she teaches us to pray for that grace.

"There be four parts of repentance," (μετανοια) "which being set together, may be likened to "an easy and short ladder, whereby we may "climb from the bottomless pit of perdition that "we cast ourselves into by our daily offences and "grievous sins, up into the castle or tower of "eternal and endless salvation.

"The first is the contrition of the heart; for "we must be earnestly sorry for our sins, and un-"feignedly lament and bewail that we have, by "them, so grievously offended our most bounteous "and merciful God; who so tenderly loved us, "that he gave his only begotten Son to die a most "bitter death, and to shed his dear heart-blood for "our redemption and deliverance. And verily "this inward sorrow and grief, being conceived "in the heart for the heinousness of sin, if it be "earnest and unfeigned, is as a sacrifice to God; "as the holy Prophet David doth testify, saying, "'A sacrifice to God is a troubled spirit: a con-"'trite and broken heart, O Lord, thou wilt not "'despise.' Psal. li. But, that this may take place "in us, we must be diligent to read and hear the "Scriptures and the word of God, which most "lively do paint out before our eyes our natural "uncleanness, and the enormity of our sinful "life. For unless we have a thorough feeling "of our sins, how can it be that we should "earnestly be sorry for them? They, therefore, "that have no mind at all neither to read nor yet "to hear God's word, there is but small hope of

" them, that they will as much as once set their
" feet, or take hold upon the first staff or step of
" this ladder, but rather will sink deeper and
" deeper into the bottomless pit of perdition.
" For if at any time, through the remorse of their
" conscience which accuseth them, they feel any
" inward grief, sorrow, or heaviness for their sins,
" forasmuch as they want the salve and comfort of
" God's word which they do despise, it will be
" unto them rather a mean to bring them to utter
" desperation than otherwise.

" The second is an unfeigned confession and
" acknowledging of our sins unto God, whom by
" them we have so grievously offended, that, if
" he should deal with us according to his justice,
" we do deserve a thousand hells, if there could be
" so many. Yet if we will, with a sorrowful and
" contrite heart, make an unfeigned confession
" of them unto God, he will freely and frankly
" forgive them, and so put all our wickedness
" out of remembrance before the sight of his
" majesty, that they shall no more be thought
" upon.

" The third part of repentance is faith, whereby
" we do apprehend and take hold upon the pro-
" mises of God touching the free pardon and for-
" giveness of our sins; which promises are sealed
" up unto us with the death and bloodshedding of
" his Son Jesus Christ. For what should avail
" and profit us to be sorry for our sins, to lament
" and bewail that we have offended our most
" bounteous and merciful Father, or to acknow-
" ledge and confess our offences and trespasses,
" though it be done never so earnestly, unless we
" do stedfastly believe and be fully persuaded,
" that God, for his Son Jesus Christ's sake, will
" forgive us all our sins, and put them out of

" remembrance and from his sight. Therefore, " they that teach repentance without a lively " faith in Jesus Christ, do teach none other but " Judas' repentance.

" The fourth is an amendment of life, or a new " life in bringing forth fruits worthy of repent- " ance. For they that do truly repent must be " clean altered and changed, they must become " new creatures, they must be no more the same " that they were before. And, therefore, thus " said John Baptist unto the Pharisees and Sad- " ducees that came to his baptism, ' O generation " ' of vipers, who hath forewarned you to flee " ' from the wrath to come? Bring forth, there- " ' fore, fruits worthy of repentance.' Whereby " we do learn, that if we will have the wrath of " God to be pacified, we must in nowise dissem- " ble, but turn unto him again with a true and " sound repentance, which may be known and " declared by good fruits, as by most sure and " infallible signs thereof.

" They that do from the bottom of their hearts " acknowledge their sins, and are unfeignedly " sorry for their offences, will cast off all hypo- " crisy, and put on true humility and lowliness " of heart. They will not only receive the phy- " sician of the soul, but also with a most fervent " desire long for him. They will not only abstain " from the sins of their former life, and from all " other filthy vices, but also flee, eschew, and " abhor all the occasions of them. And as they " did before give themselves to uncleanness of " life, so will they, from henceforward, with all " diligence give themselves to innocency, pureness " of life, and true godliness."

Such is the description which our church gives of true repentance. God grant that all her mem-

bers may consider it, and be brought to the experience of it! For God "forgives the sins of them "*(only)* who are penitent.". If this extract should be the means of recommending the excellent homilies from which it is made to a more general perusal, the transcriber's labour will have been usefully employed, even though no good effect should flow from his own thoughts on this or any other of the collects. Were these admirable sermons of our reformers better known, those who call themselves churchmen would be able to distinguish the genuine system of doctrines which forms our national creed, from the cobweb theories of some modern theologues.

We proceed to consider the prayer which is founded on the preface we have reviewed. We beg that God would "create and make in us "new and contrite hearts."

The new and contrite heart which we implore from God, is that spirit of penitence which is before declared to be essential to the forgiveness of sins. The importance which is assigned in Scripture to repentance is a loud call on us for fervor of entreaty when we pray for it. It was the main subject of the sermons which were delivered by the ancient prophets. John the Baptist dwelt chiefly on the same topic. Matt. iii. 2. Our Lord himself enforced its necessity, and explained its nature (Mark i. 15); and when he gave to his Apostles their commission, after his resurrection from the dead, this was its tenor, "that repent-"ance and forgiveness of sins should be preached "in his name among all nations." And when the Apostles began to preach, they obeyed their Lord's command by exhorting their hearers to "repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord "Jesus, for the remission of sins." Acts ii. 38;

iii. 19; xx. 21. Repentance is moreover declared by the lips of eternal truth to be essential to salvation. Luke xv. 3. 5. Surely then it becomes us with seriousness of mind to investigate its properties, attentively to consider its features, and earnestly to beseech God that he would "create and make in us new and contrite "hearts."

A penitent heart is "a *new* and contrite heart," for it is a thorough change of sentiments and affections wrought in a sinner through grace, whereby he is enabled to turn from all sin unto God. It is essentially distinguished from a mere outward reformation of conduct, though the latter is an invariable consequence of the former. A penitent heart is therefore frequently called a new heart, because it is newly produced, had no previous existence, and is totally different from the state of will and affections which before prevailed.

A penitent heart is also called a *contrite* heart, because it is *bruised* and *broken* by a sense of its sin and danger. Repentance is preceded by godly sorrow. 2 Cor. vii. 10. The sorrow which God's Spirit produces in the soul, and which effectually leads to God, differs widely from the sorrow "of the world," which "worketh death." The latter arises either from the experience or apprehension of temporal inconvenience or suffering, such as the loss of reputation, ease, health, or property; or, perhaps, from the slavish dread of eternal punishment for sin. But the former is an ingenuous grief for sin, because it is displeasing to God and dishonours him. The language of David is that of every true penitent, "Against "thee ONLY have I sinned." Psal. li. 4. And it is, worthy of remark that the contrite Psalmist

wrote this after God had pronounced his pardon by the mouth of Nathan, so that it did not arise so much from terror of conscience as from love to God and his holy law. Though there were no devil to terrify, no hell to torment, and no Judge to condemn, yet the true penitent would sincerely mourn for his sins.

A "new and contrite heart," is a heart converted to God, from whom mankind have universally departed in consequence of the fall, so that they hate God and avoid his presence. But when, under a sense of damning guilt, the revelation of mercy reaches the heart, the sinner returns to his offended Lord with a hope of pardon and acceptance through Christ Jesus, saying, "Father, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee, "and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

A new heart is a heart converted from ALL sin. There may be many partial turnings in the human mind, but it is only when a man turns from all sin, that he becomes a true penitent. A person may turn from one sin to another. A profligate, who has spent his fortune, and feels the inconveniences which his sin hath brought on him may apparently reform, and from a spendthrift become a niggard, and yet be as distant as ever from true repentance. Or, a man's besetting sin may leave him, while his heart remains unrenewed. A drunkard may break off his habits of intoxication and practise sobriety, because his constitution is ruined or his means of sinful indulgence are exhausted. A lewd person may become externally chaste, when debilitated by age or worn out with disease. But every one must perceive that in these instances there is no change of heart. A man may also abandon many corrupt practices, and yet continue a slave to

some favourite vice, as Herod did many things gladly under the influence of the Baptist's admonitions, but could not part with his beloved Herodias. Here, then, arises abundant matter for serious examination of our own souls, and a strong argument for fervency of spirit in imploring "new and contrite hearts."

For a new and contrite heart is the effect of divine influence on the mind accompanying the divine word. It is a new creation. God only can "give to men repentance to the acknow-"ledging of the truth." 2 Tim. ii. 25. If man could make himself a penitent, the promise of God would be absurd, "A new heart will I give "you, and a new spirit will I put within you; "and I will take away the stony heart out of "your flesh, and I will give you a heart of "flesh." (Ezek. xxxvi. 26. See also chap. xi. 19; Eph. ii. 10; 2 Cor. v. 17.) No man, by the efforts of unassisted nature, can express from his own eye a single tear of godly sorrow. This, therefore, is the language of all truly penitent souls, "After that I was turned, I repented; "and after that I was instructed, I smote upon "my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even con-"founded, because I did bear the reproach of my "youth." Jer. xxxi. 19. In the production of the new and contrite heart the Spirit of God, however, employs means. He makes use of the gospel of the grace of God. No man can truly hate sin till he loves God, and no man can love God till he believes in Jesus Christ. Repentance therefore, in the order of nature, is the effect of faith; according as it is written, "They shall "look unto me, whom they have pierced, and "mourn." All true godly sorrow and its gracious effects spring from a sight of our crucified God.

The law of God, though it is not the proximate cause of repentance, yet prepares the way for it by shewing us our sin and our danger; and under the horrors of this discovery it leaves us. There it left Cain and Judas. It is the Gospel displaying the love of God in Christ Jesus, which, by suggesting the hope of mercy, opens the springs of holy grief and self-abhorrence. Jesus looked on Peter after his unhappy fall, and then Peter went out and wept bitterly. It was a look of tender compassion that pierced him to the very soul. Some of the fathers have said, that Peter never afterwards to the day of his death heard a cock crow without shedding tears at the remembrance of his sin. If a skilful surgeon attended a patient afflicted with a dangerous wound, to which he was hindered from making a proper application by an accretion of proud flesh, in order to effect a cure he would first remove the obstruction and lay open the wound. It is not this mode of operation, indeed, which effects the cure; but it is a necessary preparation for the application of a healing salve. Legal terrors can only awaken the mind: it is the Gospel which affords the sovereign balm. Yet the law is necessary to be preached and understood, to arouse the conscience and to prepare the mind for the reception of those consolatory truths which are the instruments, through grace, of repentance and salvation.

In the creation, then, of a "new and contrite "heart" the conscience is first brought under a spirit of bondage. "Every transgressor in thought, "word, or deed, is guilty of death," says the holy law of God. "I am a transgressor, and therefore "liable to eternal destruction," says the enlightened conscience. Now this conviction alone

will not produce repentance, but rather despair. Therefore the conscience is further brought under the influence of pardoning mercy. "That I am "a sinner, I acknowledge; but such is every one "for whom Christ died. I grieve for sin and "hate it with a perfect hatred, because it crucified "him; and I am resolved, by the grace of God, "to lay the axe both to the root and branch of "sin, till it be entirely extirpated from my soul."

O how earnestly should we offer up the petition of our collect, that God would "create and "make in us new and contrite hearts," since repentance is necessary to all sorts and conditions of men! and unless we "worthily lament our "sins, and acknowledge our wretchedness," we cannot "obtain," even "of the God of all mercy, "remission and forgiveness." It is necessary therefore to the unconverted, whether they be rich or poor, young or old, decent or profligate in their general behaviour; because all, without exception, have sinned and come short of the glory of God. It is constantly necessary also to believers, because they are still in a state of imperfection. A Christian man's perfection, in the present life, is to bewail his imperfection. The heart of believers is the temple of God; and because it is continually contracting fresh dust and pollution, it requires to be swept with the besom of repentance from day to day.

Does the reader inquire for motives to enforce the necessity of importunity in the use of this important prayer? Where shall we begin or end in an attempt to enumerate them? Every thing, within us and without us, above and below, on the right hand and the left, reverberates in our ears the language of our collect. The mercy of God, the death of Christ, the promise of his

Spirit, the upbraidings of our own consciences, the frailty of life, the certainty and near approach of death, the severity of the future judgment, the happiness of saints in heaven, the misery of the damned in hell, and the eternal duration of both, join issue with the returning season of Lent, and powerfully address themselves to us, saying, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call "upon thy God, if so be that God will think "upon thee that thou perish not." O let us then employ the days of Lent in praying for and in cultivating a truly penitent state of mind. Thus shall we concur with the design of our church. For in vain we use her forms unless we enter into her spirit. If indeed we are enabled, through grace, to "lament our sins" worthily and in a manner suited to their demerit, and to "acknow- "ledge our wretchedness," as guilty, polluted, and helpless criminals, we shall assuredly "obtain "from the God of all grace perfect remission and "forgiveness." Nay, we have already attained it, and shall also be blessed with the happy knowledge that we are forgiven and accepted. But, without godly sorrow and humble confession, we can have no founded hope of remission, but, on the contrary, must remain eternally subject to the guilt which we have incurred. O may that "Almighty and Everlasting God, who hateth "nothing which he hath made, and who doth "forgive the sins of all them that are penitent, "create and make in us new and contrite hearts, "that we, worthily lamenting our sins and ac- "knowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of "him, the God of all grace, perfect remission and "forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Amen.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

O Lord, who for our sakes didst fast forty days and forty nights, give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

CHRISTIANITY, considered in its effects on the human heart, is a system of duties and comforts which run in parallel lines from beginning to end. It unites in itself the opposites of self-denial and enjoyment; and these are so connected, during the present state of man, that they cannot be separated. Like the links of a chain, they depend on each other, so that, without the practice of self-denial, the felicities of the Gospel cannot be experienced; and, without an experience of the privileges of the Gospel, self-denial cannot be practised. What God hath joined together, let no man therefore attempt to put asunder.

The forty days of Lent (a word which signifies spring) were very early observed in the Christian church, as we have already remarked, and seem to have originated in the forty days of humiliation which were kept by the Jews, previous to their great day of atonement*. And though there is no positive scriptural prescription either

* Wheatly, p. 201, Oxford Edit.

for that Jewish fast or our own, yet the number forty is so signalized in Scripture as to account for the duration assigned to both, and to give an evident propriety to it. On this subject a learned author has made the following conjecture, which if it be nothing more, seems at least to be ingenious and innocent; but, perhaps, many readers will think that great probability is attached to it.

"Concerning the period of forty days," during which our Lord fasted, "the words of St. Luke "seem to imply that it refers to some other trans- "action of Scripture, as a counterpart and accom- "plishment; and that this precise time of forty "days, rather than any other, was proper to "the occasion. He says, *when the days were* "*ended*, or, as the Greek will bear, 'when "'the days were *fulfilled*;' the word being the "same as in that passage of St. Mark, 'What "'shall be the sign when all these things shall "'be *fulfilled*?' But I lay no great stress upon "the word: for, whether the expression of the "Evangelist implies it or not, the period of forty "days doth certainly connect this transaction "with many others in the sacred history; and "there is reason to suppose, that the period itself "was derived from some very early occasion. "After revolving it long in my thoughts, I would "propose the following conjecture to those who "are skilful in the Scripture, namely, that the "first man spent forty days in paradise, and that "in this period he was tempted, fell into sin by "eating the forbidden fruit, and forfeited the "tree of life with the inheritance of immortality. "If this be supposed, the period of forty days will "occur naturally in other transactions, and parti- "cularly in this of our Saviour's temptation, which "is evidently founded on the temptation and fall

" of the first Adam. The *curse* brought up on the " world by the flood, and occasioned by the sin " committed in paradise, (Gen. v. 29,) was forty " days in the execution; for so long the rains " were descending, and the great deep emptying " itself upon the earth's surface, that the sin and " its history might be recognised in its punish- " ment. When the Israelites searched the land " of Canaan, that second paradise, which was to " be the reward of their probation in the wilder- " ness, they had a foretaste of it for forty days " (Numb. xiv. 33, 34); and the people who " murmured at the evil report of the faithless " spies were condemned to wander forty years in " the wilderness, a year for a day: so that this " penance symbolizes again with the curse which " was consequent on the loss of paradise.

" Under the ministry of the prophet Jonah, the " space of forty days was allowed to the Ninevites, " as an interval in which they might have oppor- " tunity of averting the divine judgment by re- " pentance and fasting. Moses spent forty days " and forty nights upon the mount, when he re- " ceived the tables of the law from the hand of " God; and the same act was repeated on occa- " sion of the tables which were broken. During " his continuance in the mount, he *did neither* " *eat bread nor drink water*; and his fast was " observed in a wilderness. Elijah also, when " he fled out of Judæa, crossed the river Jordan, " and fasted forty days and forty nights in that " wilderness wherein mount Horeb stood; where " Moses had twice fasted forty days, and where " the Israelites were led about in a state of " penance for forty years.

" This general agreement on so many occa- " sions concerning the period of forty days, might

" probably be derived from the original I have
" supposed; but however that may be, it could
" not happen by chance; and therefore it might
" well be said, when Christ had fasted forty days,
" that the days were *fulfilled*, this period, accord-
" ing to the abundant testimony of the Scripture,
" being more suitable to the occasion than any
" other. As he suffered and rose again *on the*
" *third day*, according to the Scripture, so he
" fasted *forty days*, according to the same Scrip-
" ture; and the example of Moses, independent
" of every other testimony, would have been
" thought sufficient to prove this, in the opinion of
" many good judges both ancient and modern*."

Our collect for the first Sunday in Lent was composed at the time of the Reformation. It contains—a preface, recording a remarkable scene of our blessed Saviour's life—a prayer founded thereon—and the end proposed in this act of supplication.

Our collect is addressed to the incarnate Jehovah—to him who, before his assumption of our nature, " being in the form of God, and thinking
" it not robbery to be equal with God; made
" himself of no reputation; and took upon him
" the form of a servant, and was made in the
" likeness of man, and being found in fashion as
" a man, humbled himself, and became obedient
" unto death, even the death of the cross." To him who is now " highly exalted," and whom men and angels are required to worship, do we address our prayer. Not discouraged by the consideration of his low estate, though we are called to contemplate him among the wild beasts in the wilderness, and destitute of the necessaries of

* William Jones's Works, vol. iii. p. 172.

life; but, knowing that his humiliation was voluntary, and "for our sake," we extol him for his condescension and grace, and implore from him that help of which we stand in need.

The divine Jesus "fasted forty days and forty "nights." But for what reason? Had he any personal sin which required an atonement or penance? Had he any innate corruptions to be mortified, or evil propensities to be subdued? Oh, no: "he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and "separate from sinners." Formed in the womb of a virgin by the power of the Holy Ghost, he was perfectly free from the contagion of sin. It was therefore "for our sake" that he fasted. He acted herein as the substitute of sinners. He fasted that we might eternally feast on the hidden manna.

But the clew which our church has afforded us in contemplating our Lord's fast requires a more particular discussion. Christ in his long fast of forty days and nights is to be considered—as our sacrifice—and as our exemplar.

His long and painful fast was not only preparatory to the sacrifice which he was afterwards to make of himself, but, indeed, was itself a part of that series of meritorious sufferings, which were necessary to the expiation of our guilt and the justification of our persons. As the paschal lamb was set apart for immolation four days before its death, (Exod. xii. 3,) so the Lamb of God was solemnly set apart and prepared, as it were, by his baptism and subsequent fast, to become the sacrifice for our sins, in the fourth year previous to his crucifixion. Our Lord Jesus Christ began to be a propitiation for our sins so soon as he was born, and every act of his life was significant of his office, and of a vicarious nature. And therefore,

as his fast of forty days and nights is a prominent feature in the evangelical history, and an important article of our Saviour's memoirs, there is a great propriety in our commemoration of it by a partial imitation. It is the privilege of his disciples to "know the fellowship of his sufferings," that thereby they may attain to a participation of "the power of his resurrection." And it is very difficult to conceive how a luxurious full-fed sinner can have any communion with a self-denying, fasting Saviour.

Our Lord Christ is moreover to be considered in his fast as our exemplar and pattern. It is not indeed our duty to imitate him, by abstaining from all food for forty days and forty nights because he did so; for his human nature was, like the bodies of Moses and Elijah in their respective fasts, miraculously supported by the hand of God. And were we to attempt a literal conformity to his pattern in this inimitable act of his humiliation, we should tempt God by an instance of gross enthusiasm, and, if we persisted therein, should at length be guilty of suicide. But, though an exact imitation of our Lord's fast be neither feasible nor required, yet it is absolutely necessary that the followers of a self-denying Lord should deny themselves; for he himself has positively declared that "if any man "will come after him" and be his disciple, he must "deny himself, take up his cross and follow "him." Matt. xvi. 24. That the whole mediatorial course of our adorable Lord, from the time that he quitted the bosom of the Father on the work of love which he had undertaken till he returned thither again, was a continued act of self-renunciation and self-abasement, is evident. And with what propriety do we bear his

sacred and beloved name, unless we are imitators of his example? That the life of Christ was designed to be a model for the direction of his followers in all its imitable acts, is plain. For "he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself "also so to walk even as he walked." And it is the character of his disciples that they "follow "the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," under the conduct of his example, of his precepts, and of his Spirit. The life of Christ is "a compendium "of duty—an epitome of morality*."

The place chosen for the scene of our Lord's fast strongly recommends to his followers the advantage of setting apart frequent seasons for retirement from the commerce of the world. In a desert place, a howling wilderness, the second Adam regained for us the paradise which the first had forfeited, and procured for us a new right to the tree of life by abstaining from the baneful fruit which grows on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the former of which had been lost by an intemperate desire after the latter, and a surreptitious seizure of it. By a temptation arising from society, Adam fell. By secluding himself from society, Christ, considered as man, was prepared to resist those temptations with which he was afterwards assailed—temptations exactly of the same kind with those which fatally succeeded in paradise; for both consisted of an appeal to the threefold principle of corruption, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and "the pride of life." The fatal fruit was "plea-"sant to the sight, good for food, and to be "desired to make one wise." The baits which were presented to the second Adam were also

* Horne's Sermons.

addressed to sensuality, pride, and covetousness. But when the prince of this world came, he found nothing in him; whereas, we, being "earthly, sensual, and devilish," find it hard work to "renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh."

Our great pattern, not only on the occasion which our collect records but also on many others, indeed as often as it was possible, sought retirement from the world, abridging the usual hours of repose, and frequently spending whole nights in sleepless solitude. But what need had he to seclude himself from scenes which never endangered his moral safety, nor interrupted his calm pursuit of the great object of life? Herein "he "hath set us an example that we should follow "his steps." Corporeal fasting will avail us little, unless it be accompanied with mental. An abstinence from that food on which the carnal mind lives, is the great end to be promoted by the temporary deprivation or abridgment of bodily aliment. By a frequent seclusion of ourselves from the world, we shall cultivate communion with God, be armed against the power of temptation in our unavoidable intercourse with it, and shall learn, after the example of our Lord, to resist and conquer its seductive influence.

We now proceed to consider the prayer, which our church has founded on the recollection of our Lord's fast of forty days and forty nights. We implore "grace that we may use" due "abstinence," under the direction and encouragement which the example of Christ affords. "For we have not a high priest which cannot "be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, "but was in all points tempted, like as we are, "yet without sin."

It may appear strange to persons who are un-

acquainted with the genuine nature of godliness, that our church should deem the grace of God to be necessary to the practice of abstinence. They may ask, in a tone of self-confidence,—Can I not, without supernatural assistance, abstain from my usual food, or diminish the quantity of it?—Such objectors will find, that temperance is reckoned by the Apostle among the fruits of the Spirit. Gal. v. 22, 23; and 2 Pet. i. 5–7. And if temperance be the result of divine grace, abstinence is a higher degree of self-crucifixion. Carnal appetites are too strong to be overcome by the deductions of reason or the precepts of man. For though a natural power of fasting be allowed to every one, the moral power can only be derived from renewing grace. The bias of the will is subject only to Omnipotence; and it is the motive, which sanctifies the act.

That self-mortification is a Christian duty, no one would gather from the general spirit and habits of those who are called Christians in the present day. For self-indulgence seems to be the prevailing object of concern among all ranks and orders of mankind, both in the church and out of it. On making a comparison between modern profession and that of the primitive church, the mind is struck with the amazing difference that prevails between them. The wholesome discipline which was then enforced would now be thought an intolerable burthen; and were an attempt to restore it made, the ranks of those who bear the name of Christ would be so thinned that few would be left to occupy our pews and join in our services. Their life resembled a warfare; ours a profound peace. They were soldiers in the field; we, troops reposing in their barracks. They cultivated hardness; we indulge

softness and unmanly delicacy. That much real godliness exists in the English church, is not to be doubted; but that it is not of that lively, spiritual, and fervid cast, which the primitive church exhibited, is also evident to those who are acquainted with the memoirs of the first ages*. Perhaps to the want of self-discipline may be attributed many of those severe chastisements which we receive from the immediate hand of God. For if the heart be purified, and the soul finally saved, it must be by a mortification of sensuality in some way or other. And if we refuse to engage in the work of self-denial, God must, in pity to our souls, perform it for us. The agency and the internal instrumentality employed in this gracious change are the same in all cases; but the external means used may vary. To this St. Paul seems to refer, when, after speaking of the disorders of the Corinthian church, he says, "For this cause many are "weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should "not be judged. But when we are judged, we are "chastened of the Lord, that we should not be "condemned with the world." 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32†.

To propose particular rules for the duty of abstinence is both unnecessary and impossible. It is unnecessary, because that grace for which we pray will, if earnestly implored, both teach us what is right and enable us to practise it. It is, moreover, impossible, because the circum-

* See Bingham's Ecclesiastical Antiquities, and Milner's History of the Church of Christ.

† Κρίνεσθαι, pro *puniri*, ut 1 Pet. iv. 6. 17. Si inde factorum pœnas de nobis ipsis exigeremus, animo contrito et humiliato, lachrymis, jejuniis, et aliis σκληραγωγίαις, non opus haberet Deus pœnas nobis immittere.—*Pol. Syn. in locum.*

stances of individuals greatly vary. The discipline of the primitive church was very rigid. To this in after ages Popery added a tedious round of silly and unmeaning superstitions. Our church, while she has carefully expunged from her ritual the puerile and pharisaic innovations of Popery, and is desirous of avoiding the laxity of Antinomian anarchy, laments her inability to restore that external system of ecclesiastical government, which produced such happy effects in the early period of Christianity*.

That religious abstinence is required in a much higher degree than is now commonly practised, both with respect to general habits and particular seasons, needs very little proof. Our Lord has laid down rules for the mode of observing the latter in his sermon on the mount. And to this express approbation of particular seasons appropriated to special abstinence, the example of holy men of old, both under the Old Testament dispensation and the New, may be added. It was a duty all along observed by devout men, and acceptable to God under the Old and New Testament, both as it was helpful to their devotion, and as it became a part of it. Public enjoined fasts, upon extraordinary occasions, are so frequent in Scripture, that they need no particular notice. And as to private fasts, we read that David chastened his soul with fasting. And Daniel sought the Lord, not only "with prayers "and supplications," but "with fasting." Anna "served and worshipped God in prayers and "fasting night and day." Cornelius was fasting as well as praying, when the vision came, that brought salvation to his house. When Paul and

* See the Commination service.

Barnabas were to be set apart to an especial ministration, there was fasting joined to prayer; and St. Paul approved himself "a minister of "God in fastings" as well as in "labours and "watchings: he kept his body under, and brought "it into subjection*, lest, while he preached to "others, he himself should be a cast-away†." 1 Cor. ix. 27.

In the chapter from which this declaration of St. Paul respecting his own daily practice is quoted, the Christian life is compared to the Isthmian games. And the latter affords a striking illustration of the former. In both a prize is proposed, and a course marked out;—in both a proclamation is made by authorised heralds inviting candidates to the contention by exhibiting

* The first of the two verbs, which St Paul has used to describe his self-mortification, literally signifies to *bruise* and *buffet;* and it strongly expresses those acts of self-denial to which the Apostle habituated himself. Respecting the second, a critic has observed, that it is a word taken from the boxers, who *dragged off* their conquered antagonists like *slaves*. With what propriety these metaphors can be applied to the practice of modern Christians, the reader must determine for himself.

† Wheatley's Feasts and Fasts. From this declaration of St. Paul it has been inferred that he was doubtful about his own salvation. The inference is, however, illegitimate. For in other passages he speaks with assured confidence, declaring that he "knew whom he had believed, and was "persuaded that he would keep that which he had com-"mitted to him against that day." And even here the necessity of means does not imply an uncertainty of event. As when the same Apostle, on his voyage to Rome, told the centurion, that unless the mariners abode in the ship the passengers could not be saved, he did not express any doubt of the divine promise which was made to him, that both his own life and the lives of all that sailed with him should be saved. Comp. Acts xxvii. 31, with ver. 21–26. On this subject the reader will derive great pleasure and satisfaction from a perusal of the judicious Hooker's Discourse "On the Certainty and Perpetuity of Faith in "the Elect."

the reward, and by describing the rules of the combat;—in both there are spectators to applaud or censure, and an umpire to determine the success of the several persons who have entered their names on the lists;—in both temperance and exertion are absolutely requisite to a rational hope of victory. By these considerations the Apostle tried to excite holy ambition in the bosoms of the Corinthian Christians, to rouse them to exertion, and to invigorate their minds. "Every one that striveth for the mastery" in these games "is temperate in all things;" abstaining from whatever might enervate his strength, and submitting to a regular course of diet, exercise, and hardship, that he may be the more capable of exerting himself with success. "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, "but we an incorruptible." The object of their zealous pursuit, for the attainment of which they submit to sacrifices of personal ease and indulgence the most severe, is nothing more than a garland of wild olive, laurel, pine-tree, or parsley —rewards that have no intrinsic value, and that must soon wither. Whereas our object is a substantial crown of glory that fadeth not away,—a durable benefit. The rigours to which the combatants in the ancient games submitted appear to have been very great, so ardent was their desire of attaining the bauble of human applause*. And oh! what sacrifices should we

* Respicit ad morem Athletarum, qui certâ victûs ratione utebantur, et corpus variis exercitiis ad certamen præparabant.

Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit,
Abstinuit Venere et Baccho. *Hor.*

Μελει σοι Ολυμπια νικησαι; &c.——*Epictetus.*

Vis in Olympicis vincere? Oportet itaque te ordinem

not be willing to make, whose souls are at stake, before whose eyes hell displays its terrors on the one hand and heaven its glories on the other, whose ears will either be saluted with the seraphic sound of "Come ye blessed," or for ever tingle with the horrible denunciation, "Go ye "cursed!"

It is not in the article of our food only that abstinence is required, but the requisition has respect to every worldly and carnal concupiscence. The world must be "crucified to us, "and we to the world." Gal. vi. 14. "The "flesh" also must be crucified "with its affec- "tions and lusts." "For he that soweth to "the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; "but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the "Spirit reap life everlasting." "If our right "eye offend us," by proving an inlet to sin, "we must pluck it out, and cast it from us." "And if our right hand offend us," by becoming an instrument of unrighteousness, we must "cut "it off, and cast it from us. For it is profitable "for us, that one of our members should perish, "and not that our whole body be cast into hell." Matt. v. 29, 30. The animated exhortation of St. Peter is of the same general complexion: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as pilgrims and "strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts which war "against the soul." 1 Pet. ii. 11. In our dress, company, employments, relaxations, and a variety of other things, indeed in all, the spirit of a Christian pilgrim is required to be exemplified by us.

servare, cibos præscriptos comedere, a bellariis abstinere, statis horis exerceri, in æstu, in frigore; non aquam bibere, non vinum; denique præfecto tuo, tanquam medico, prorsus te tradere.—*Poli Synopsis in* 1 Cor. ix. 23.

Now who is so blind as not to perceive the necessity of divine grace to a compliance with the requisitions of Scripture respecting the abstinence which it enjoins? Who can fail of approving the language of our collect in which we pray for it? Who can be so stupid and insensible to his own interest, so great a stranger to the genuine spirit of Christianity, and to the corruption of his own heart, as to refuse a cordial union with the cry of the church in supplicating for the grace of religious abstinence?

The end for which we implore the grace of abstinence is very important. It is that "our "flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever "obey the godly motions of him, who for our "sake did fast forty days and forty nights, in "righteousness and true holiness, to his honour "and glory, who liveth and reigneth with the "Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world "without end." In all believers "the flesh "lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against "the flesh; and these are contrary the one to "the other, so that they cannot do the things "that they would." In the most advanced Christians corrupt propensities still exist which require watchfulness, abstinence, and prayer, to keep them under; for "in us, that is in our "flesh," even to the end of life, "dwelleth no "good thing." The subjugation of the flesh to the Spirit is therefore the object of earnest prayer and of constant endeavour to the true Christian, whether he be a child, or a father in Christ. It is supposed to be the object, aim, and end of all the members of our church; for unless it be, they cannot use our collect without hypocrisy. Let the reader inquire if it be *his*.

By "godly motions" we are to understand

those holy thoughts which are suggested to the mind, and that heavenly attraction which is communicated to it, by the word and Spirit of Christ. Obedience to these is that "holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord." And as the Spirit of God, moving on the face of the deep, was the primary cause of arrangement and beauty in the chaotic mass out of which all things have been formed, so also it is the motion of the divine Spirit on the human soul which is the producing agency of "all holy "desires, good counsels, and just works." "It "is he that worketh in us both to will and to do "of his good pleasure."

Now, without abstinence the flesh cannot be subdued to the Spirit; for the health and vigour of the one is the sickness and infirmity of the other. The reciprocal antipathy of these contending principles is such that they cannot flourish together; so that, without a subjugation of the flesh to the Spirit, the godly motions of Christ within us cannot be obeyed. How important then is our prayer for the grace of abstinence, in order that, by obtaining it, self-mortification may produce and cherish within us the new life of holiness! The transformation of the caterpillar affords an apt emblem of the process of the life of grace. At first it crawls on the ground a mean and despicable worm, leading an earthly and sensual life. That life is then extinguished, after which it becomes a new creature. Its life is ethereal. Its habits, food, and enjoyments, are all new.

In our abstinence from carnal gratification and its consequent effects, "the honour and "glory" of God our Saviour is nearly concerned; yea, "the honour and glory" of each person

in the adorable Godhead. For herein the Father sees the fruit of his everlasting love; the Son, the fruit of his redeeming grace; and the Holy Ghost, the fruit of his renewing power. It is to the honour "and glory of him who liveth and "reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, "one God, world without end," that we be enabled to use "such abstinence that, our flesh "being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever "obey his godly motions in righteousness and "true holiness." For it proves that he "*liveth*" to make intercession for us; and that he *reigneth* to conquer in us those enemies which no arm but his own could subdue. Those who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" will be an everlasting monument to his praise.

It may be asked, whether the doctrine taught in this Essay be not popish and legal? If the drift of it be misapprehended, it will appear to be such. It may be proper, therefore, to observe, that the necessity of self-mortification has no connexion with the justification of the fallen soul in the sight of God, as a cause has with its effect; for the worshippers who use this collect are considered, on a supposition of sincerity in their profession, as persons who have believed in Christ to the salvation of their souls; and, consequently, self-mortification in them is the effect, not the cause, of a transition from death unto life. The object then which is proposed by the use of abstinence is not justification but sanctification, as our collect fully declares. And even in this relation it is not the efficient cause of purification, but a mean employed for its promotion. The amputation of a mortified limb in the human body is not the cause of animal life, but a prudent measure adapted to its preser-

vation and improvement; and the agency by which the operation is performed must, of all necessity, be extrinsical. To trust in acts of self-mortification, as the meritorious cause of acceptance with God, or as sufficient, without divine influence, to sanctify the heart, is the essence of Pelagianism and Popery; whilst to deny the necessity of self-mortification, and to neglect the practice of it, is the essence of Antinomianism and the height of spiritual delusion.

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body; and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

An exact uniformity prevails in the religious experience of the genuine members of the catholic church, however distant from each other may be the ages in which they have lived, and however different the outward circumstances in which they have been placed. This uniformity is especially manifest in the addresses which they present to the throne of grace. At its footstool they have all been found, stating the same wants, making the same requests, and urging the same arguments. There David, a thousand years before the coming of Christ, cried, "Make haste to help me, O Lord, "my salvation." And there all the genuine members of the church of England at the present day, and near two thousand years after his coming, cry in the same strain of self-abasement and fervent desire, "Almighty God, who seest," &c.

If the awakened sinner would consult his own feelings, wants, and desires, and compare them with the provisions of the Gospel, he would derive from the result of his inquiry a complete system

of orthodox divinity. He would be in no danger of Socinianism, Arianism, or Pelagianism; for he would find his guilt, helplessness and misery to be so great, that an "Almighty" Redeemer, Comforter, Sanctifier, and Preserver, is essentially necessary to his soul. "He that believeth hath "the witness in himself,"—a witness or testimony which all the sophistical arguments of fallen reason, his own or of others, cannot invalidate. To the criterion of this testimony we may safely refer the character of our established forms of worship, and submit that they should stand or fall by the verdict of an awakened conscience. Let them be brought to this test, and they will appear to have been the production of workmen who need not to be ashamed. Surely the conscious mind must cordially join issue with the collect for the second Sunday in Lent now under consideration.

Our collect contains—an introduction, stating the ground on which the subsequent request is built,—and that request for divine conservation, both in our bodies and our souls.

The exceedingly great and precious promises of God afford a mirror, in which we may distinctly see our own deplorable condition. For he has not promised any thing which we do not want, and which we can derive from our own resources. In the natural world he has made nothing in vain, but every production of his plastic hand discovers his wisdom, power, and goodness. And in the covenant of redemption, the master-piece of wisdom, no needless blessing is provided. And oh! if this criterion of our state be resorted to, how humiliating will it prove! It will disclose guilt, helplessness, and misery, in the utmost degree. For if God has promised

help and salvation, it is because we are lost and impotent in ourselves. This we confess in the introductory part of our collect; and oh! that we may so feel it, that sincerity may be mixed with our confessions, and fervour of spirit with our supplications!

The appeal to Omniscience which forms the preface to our collect has a two-fold aspect corresponding with the subsequent prayer. It relates both to our bodies and to our souls.

The feeble and endangered state of our bodies, though a concern subordinate to that of our souls, is an object of some regard. For the welfare of the soul is therein implicated. And though the Christian believer knows that, in the scale of importance, no comparison is to be instituted between the interests of the immortal soul and those of the mortal body, yet he is allowed to care for the latter, to provide for its wants, to feel its pains, and to seek relief from its miseries. A contrary requisition would be unnatural; for "no "man ever hated his own flesh, but naturally "loveth and cherisheth it."

"That we have no power of ourselves to help "ourselves," is a truth which is firmly impressed on the heart of every genuine Christian. He differs widely in his views and feelings, even respecting the conduct of his temporal affairs, from the unawakened world. He realises a divine Providence in all his concerns. That "in God "we live, are moved*, and have our being," forms a part of his creed. And, therefore "in all his "ways he acknowledges God, that God may "direct his paths."

Both his retrospective and prospective views

* Κινούμεθα.

of life are such as become a creature and a sinner. That independency of God at which Adam aimed, when, seduced by the temptation of the wicked one, he took the forbidden fruit, and which is the object pursued by all his guilty and blinded children, the believer knows to be unattainable; and, moreover, he feels no desire after it. For being reconciled to God by the death of his Son, and persuaded of the divine good-will towards him, he is assured that he is in the best hands, while in the hands of God. Independency, the idol of the unconverted heart, is his abhorrence. He not only is poor and helpless, but he acquiesces in being so; and while God condescends to be his helper, he would not be otherwise. When he looks back to the days of infancy, childhood, youth, and manhood, which have elapsed, he perceives that a divine hand has conducted, preserved, and upheld him through every stage. The many dangers, seen and unseen, which he has escaped, the continual support which he has experienced, and all the comforts which he has enjoyed, he attributes, not to his own wisdom, prudence, foresight, vigilance, or strength, but to divine Providence. He ceases to "sacrifice to the net, and to burn incense unto "the drag, because his portion has been fat, and "his meat plenteous:" (Hab. i. 16.) for he sees that it is God who hath "crowned him with "loving kindness and tender mercies."

In the prospective views of life which the believer takes, he feels that his "help standeth "in the name of the Lord who made heaven and "earth:" for he has "no power of himself to "help himself." As the ivy becomes more feeble by its growth, and is less capable of supporting itself, the further its branches are spread, so it is

also in the Christian's experience. He lives but to acquire daily and hourly evidence of his own imbecility. And as the ivy while it sprouts is furnished with unnumbered fibres which spring out of every shoot and seize on its supporter, in like manner faith, in every occurrence that arises, finds a new occasion of adhering to God and of trusting in him. And it is not only in the great concern of salvation, but also in the minutest circumstance of life, that the Christian finds his own incapacity for self-guidance and self-support. Hence prayer is mingled with all his undertakings, and praise accompanies all his successes.

The appeal to divine Omniscience which is made in our collect, has a further relation to our spiritual concerns. These are infinitely more important than those of the outer man, and with respect to these our utter weakness is still more evident. For in whatever point of view we contemplate them, it is undeniable that "we have "no power of ourselves to help ourselves."

As transgressors of the divine law we are in a state of condemnation: for "as many as are "under the law" (and all men are born under it) "are under a curse." Have we then "any power "of ourselves to help ourselves" by reversing the sentence of the law, and by restoring ourselves to the favour of God? None at all. This appears from the awful nature of the divine attributes, from the requisitions of the immutable law of God, and from the provision made for our relief in his Gospel. His inexorable justice requires satisfaction which we can never make; and his truth, which has promulged the tremendous decree that "the soul which sinneth shall die," cannot fail of being accomplished. The only alternative which his law recognises is, "This do and live;"

or " Fail of doing it, and suffer the penalty." It leaves no room for repentance, and allows of no failure. It is positive and determinate in its decision. The provision of the Gospel preaches also the utter helplessness of man in the work of expiation. For an atoning sacrifice has been offered, which at once shews the heinousness of human guilt, and the utter inability of man to remove the burden of it from his own shoulders by his own power.

If we are viewed as rational creatures placed under a covenant of works, a perfect obedience to the divine law is necessary to constitute us righteous in the sight of the great Lawgiver, and to entitle us to the rewards which under that covenant he has promised. But have we " any " power of ourselves to help ourselves" by fulfilling the terms of life? Alas, no. For we have already failed in ten thousand instances of accomplishing that which the law requires; and so great is the corruption of our nature that we must necessarily fail in every future attempt to fulfil it, even supposing, what will not be admitted, that the obedience of a part of our lives could be accepted instead of the whole. The least defect invalidates our claim on the score of personal obedience, and leaves us the prey of despair.

" Being alienated from the life of God through " the ignorance that is in us," and " dead in tres- " passes and sins," we are unconscious of our own spiritual state. We are unacquainted with our disease and the remedy which is provided for it. We are insensible of our danger, and also of the way of escape. Have we, then, any " power of " ourselves to help ourselves," by rousing ourselves to the all-important inquiry, " What must I do

" to be saved?"—Will fallen reason, left to itself, by its own deductions ever infer our lost condition, or the way of salvation?—Will conscience ever awake from its torpid state of inactivity without enlightening and enlivening influence from God? Surely no. For as " no man hath quickened his " own soul," it is impossible that any man ever should do it. Left to ourselves we should " sleep " on and take our" carnal " rest," till we were roused to " weeping and wailing and gnashing of " teeth," by " the worm that never dieth and the " fire that is not quenched."

When we become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, " quickened together with him," and " made alive from the dead," our minds are illuminated by his word and Spirit, our hearts by faith embrace him in his various saving offices, and our will has received a new bias, whereby it chooses him for its portion. But have we any " power of ourselves to help ourselves," by persevering in the way of faith and obedience, by strengthening the graces and habits which by Almighty Power have been formed within our bosoms, and by enduring to the end in the pursuit of glory, honour, and immortality? Oh! no. Those who are kept, are kept by the power " of God through faith unto salvation." The bruised reed would soon be crushed, the smoking wick would of itself expire, were not God the keeper of Israel. " When we consider how weak " we are in ourselves, yea the very strongest " among us, and how assaulted, we wonder, and " justly we may, that any can continue one day in " a state of grace. But when we look on the " strength by which we are guarded, the power " of God, then we see the reason of stability to

" the end. For Omnipotence supports us, and " the everlasting arms are under us*."

Now the carnal mind is unconscious of its own imbecility in all these respects, and a thousand others which might be specified. In its own vain and proud estimation it is equal to any thing that is required. It cannot, therefore, without hypocrisy, adopt the language of our church. Its true sentiments would be expressed in the preface of our collect, if its appeal were reversed by an omission of the negative particle. The genuine members of our church, however, mean what they assert, when they address " Almighty God," as " seeing that they have no power of themselves " to help themselves."

It is a consideration full-fraught with consolation to the awakened mind, that God doth see and is intimately acquainted with all its weakness. For while his promises demonstrate his complete knowledge of our case, they demonstrate also that the most complete provision is made for its relief. Till " the unsearchable riches of " Christ" are revealed to the soul, it is no wonder that it is afraid to prosecute an inquiry into its own poverty and wretchedness; for the sight thereof must necessarily overwhelm it with despair. But when that fulness of grace which is in him is exhibited to view, it can bear the discovery of its own emptiness, freely confesses it, and derives comfort from God's acquaintance with it. We have therefore encouragement in the introductory part of our collect, while we proceed to consider the request which it makes.

We pray that " Almighty God, who seeth that " we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves,

* Archbishop Leighton on 1 Pet. vol. i. p. 57.

"would keep us both outwardly in our bodies and "inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended "from all adversities which may happen to the "body, and from all evil thoughts which may "assault and hurt the soul, through Jesus Christ "our Lord."

We implore, in the first place, the conservation of our bodies, "that they may be de-"fended from all adversities which may happen "to them."

The "adversities" to which our bodies are liable, are too generally and sensibly felt, and consequently too well known, to make a recapitulation of them necessary. And indeed they are so many, that an enumeration of them would be impossible. Our exposure to bodily adversity, in some shape or other, is incessant. As one wave of the sea is impelled by another*, so is it also with respect to the evils of fallen nature. But as this is a trite subject, though one that is universally interesting, we shall only make one remark concerning it. That any man possessed of the power of reasoning on the past, present, and future—who has contemplated the experience of others and reflected on his own—can be happy for a moment without a persuasion of an interest in the divine favour and a hope full of immortality, is truly astonishing. For the present condition of man is like that of a shipwrecked mariner, who is tossed on the surface of a tempestuous ocean, to the bottom of which he is every moment in danger of sinking; or to that of one who inhabits a country which is shaken by an earthquake, who sees his friends and neighbours every moment ingulphed around him, while he

* Unda impellitur undâ.

himself totters on the brink of the yawning pit*. That any man under such circumstances can yield up himself to a carnal security, and neglect to seek an interest in the only Saviour and Deliverer

* The Author ventures to present to the reader the following rhythmical version of the image he has here introduced:—

When Lisbon's* towers were levell'd with the ground,
And all her palaces in ruins laid,
Her shores with dire convulsions rent around—
Her seas hurl'd upward from their weedy bed—
Her num'rous citizens, with terror pale,
By thousands sinking to one common grave;
Few left to tell the melancholy tale,
Saved from th' insatiate gulph, or whelming wave;—
(The scene, though past, has left a pang behind;
Still the remembrance wounds the sympathetic mind:)

Amidst the general wreck a favour'd wight,
Whom Heaven preserv'd for happier days to come,
Stood on the chaos, shudd'ring at the sight,
And shrinking from his own impending doom;
The stately structures, nodding from above,
Threaten'd to crush him in their massive heap;
While o'er the rocking earth his footsteps move,
Toss'd like the ridges of the billow'd deep:—
"O where for refuge shall I now repair?
"Which way I turn, (he cried,) I meet the fiend Despair."

Just at this awful crisis, when appear'd
No cheering view of life or future joys,
Through the surrounding uproar's rage he heard
Distinctly, with surprise, a friendly voice.
Towards the point he turn'd with eager haste,
From whence the welcome sounds salute his ear;
Whilst, with alternate throbs, his doubtful breast
Is sooth'd by dawning hope, or torn with fear:—
"Hither, desponding mortal, bend thine eye,
"And wing thy speedy flight—behold a refuge nigh."

* A great part of this city was destroyed by an earthquake which also set the remainder on fire, on All Saints day, 1755.

of lost sinners, is a proof how deeply the fall has injured our understandings as well as our hearts.

But what ground of confidence have we in praying for bodily conservation? Has God promised to his people absolute exemption from those adversities, which may happen to the body? Has he afforded it to any of our predecessors in

" Your case was lately mine; while earth beneath
" Threaten'd t' ingulph me every step I took,
" Where'er I turn'd, some varied form of death,
" With hideous aspect, met each anxious look;
" When lo, at last, a tow'ring rock I spied,
" Fix'd in the centre of the waving plain;
" Is there a safe retreat so near? (I cried,
" And sought with rapid steps its top to gain:)
" Here, unassail'd by danger, I abide,
" Safe from the yawning chasm, or yonder swelling tide."

Swift as an arrow from the twanging yew,
By the strong archer's nervous sinew bent,
The trembling fugitive with ardour flew,
Nor felt the treach'rous soil o'er which he went,—
Nor stopp'd to rest a moment, till, at last,
His eager footsteps press'd the solid ground,
Where, freed from all his direful perils past,
And all his fears, security he found:
Then, falling on his face, with grateful zeal
He kiss'd the sheltering rock, the basis of his weal.

Then to his friendly monitor he fled,
And thank'd him for the important warning giv'n,
Wishing a thousand blessings on his head,
While both adore the sov'reign grace of Heaven.
With hands uplifted and o'erflowing eyes,
And grateful hearts, they pour their joys abroad;
Then from their state of low prostration rise,
T' invite their neighbours to the same abode:—
" Hither, desponding mortal, turn thine eye,
" And wing thy speedy flight—the place of rest is nigh!"

Reader, behold in this sad tale of woe,
A lively picture of earth's transient scene;
There 's nothing permanent of things below—
No perpetuity in joys terrene.

the walk of faith, many of whom have doubtless surrounded his throne of grace with as great sincerity as ourselves? Have we not seen that sickness and health, life and death, come alike to all, whether saints or sinners, children of light, or

Not strength of frame corporeal safety yields,
Nor length of days our utmost cares secure;
But all things fluctuate, like Lisbon's fields—
No earthly happiness can long endure.
Our friends are mingling with the common clay,
Like the autumnal leaves, they wither and decay.

Hell's awful gulph is open'd to admit
Th' unpardon'd sinner to its fiery bed,
Where quenchless flames, through all th' unbottom'd pit,
By show'rs sulphureous are for ever fed.
There all th' impenitent, with ceaseless rage,
Gnaw their own flaming tongues in deep despair;
No future hopes their agonies assuage—
No ray of comfort ever enters there.
Strange, that immortals feel no fond desire
T' escape the threaten'd pangs of everlasting fire!

Here of that Rock divine an emblem see,
Rear'd for the safety of our fallen race;
Which, through the rounds of vast eternity
Shall stand, a proof of Heaven's unbounded grace!
Firm and immoveable shall this remain,
Till all the madd'ning storms of life be o'er;
Nor can the wretch its shelter seek in vain,—
But, plac'd thereon, shall live for evermore.
"Hither, desponding mortal, bend thine eye,
"And wing thy speedy flight—the place of safety's nigh."

Blest Rock! whose bosom to the fainting soul
Affords perpetual and secure repose;
Beneath thy base the billows vainly roll,
Which from their madness no disturbance knows.
Hence while the sinner's perils I survey,
Anticipating nature's final strife,
Heart-melting pity bids me point the way
Which leads to safety, peace, and endless life.
"O man, repent—to this asylum flee,
"Ere death has clos'd thine eyes in hopeless misery!"

children of this world? In answer to these questions, while we admit that the divine promises are the proper and only ground of confidence in prayer, and that no promise of complete exemption from calamity is made to the servants of God, yet the use of our collect may be fully vindicated. It is our duty and privilege to pray for bodily preservation, with a submission of ourselves to the divine will. For we find that saints have thus prayed in all ages of the church, and that the Lord has heard them. Our petition, however, must be offered with a clause of limitation always implied: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup "pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but "as thou wilt." "So far as is consistent with "the glory of thy name and the spiritual advan- "tage of our immortal part, we implore defence "against those bodily adversities to which sin has "exposed us, and which the curse of thy law has "threatened; and that when thou seest it neces- "sary to inflict chastisement on us, thou wouldest "mitigate it as much as may be, afford us patience "and comfort under it, and in thine own good "time bring it to a happy issue." We have abundant encouragement to present our bodies as well as our souls before the mercy-seat, for they also are purchased by the blood of Christ, are made "temples of the Holy Ghost," are destined to be instruments of promoting the divine glory on earth, and to be partakers of the "rest that remaineth for the people of God" in heaven.

We proceed to a far more important object of concern, and pray for the conservation of our souls, that they may "be defended from all evil; "thoughts which may assault and hurt them." There is no necessity of a pause in order to prove

to those persons, who are attentive to the transactions of their own breasts, the propriety of this petition, or the necessity of earnestness in the use of it. For the bosom of fallen man is the laboratory of the prince of this world, in which he is continually fabricating evil thoughts—thoughts that are inconsistent with the purity of the divine law, and offensive to the holiness of the divine nature.

In our natural state "every imagination of the "thoughts of our hearts is only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. Man, of his own nature is fleshly "and carnal, corrupt, naught, sinful and disobe-"dient to God; without any spark of goodness "in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, "only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds*." And even after conversion, legions of "evil "thoughts" daily arise in the bosom, and "assault "and hurt the soul." Who would choose to have the thoughts of a single day—of a single hour—exposed to the view of the world, or even to the confidential inspection of his most intimate friend? No one would willingly submit to such an exposure. For many of our thoughts are not only offensive to the infinite purity of God, but would shock the delicacy of a fellow-creature. And the more we are introduced to an acquaintance with God, the more clearly do we discern the impurity of our own bosoms.

Our "evil thoughts," if not counteracted by the influence of divine grace, must destroy our souls by keeping them in a state of alienation from God and of unfitness for heaven; nay, by preparing them more and more for the society of devils and the mansions of outer darkness.

* Homily for Whitsunday.

And even after that they become a source of sorrow to the mind, so far as they prevail they "hurt the soul" by interrupting its communion with God, its progress in sanctification, and its energy in prosecuting the great object of life, the glory of God.

Now who can defend us from "those evil "thoughts which assault and hurt the soul" but God only? Surely omnipotence and omniscience are required for this purpose. Our own imbecility is evident at the first glance. If the subtilty and power of Satan, the corruption of our own hearts, out of which evil thoughts naturally proceed, (Matt. xv. 19,) the nature of thought, and the excitements to evil by which we are surrounded, are taken into consideration for a moment, we shall perceive the impossibility of being our own defenders. If any man doubt it, let him make the trial. Let him endeavour, the next time he bends his knee, opens the Bible, or attends public worship (seasons at which it may be supposed that the task is feasible if at any) to exclude from his mind all worldly ideas. The result will issue in the confusion of his imagined ability.

Oh, what need, then, is there for earnestness in the use of our collect! The awakened soul will feel its excellence, urge the precious name of Jesus to enforce the success of its petitions, and add at its close a hearty "Amen."

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty to be our defence against all our enemies, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"THE brethren in Egypt (saith St. Augustin, "Epist. 121) are reported to have many prayers, "but every one of them very short; as if they "were darts thrown out with a kind of sudden "quickness, lest that sudden and erect attention "of mind, which in prayer is very necessary, "should be wasted or dulled through continu- "ance, if their prayers were few and long." Our collects are "prayers whereunto devout "minds have added a piercing kind of brevity, "as well in that respect which we have already "mentioned, as also thereby the better to ex- "press that quick and speedy expedition where- "with ardent affections, the very wings of "prayer, are delighted to present our suits in "heaven, even sooner than our tongues can "devise to utter them*."

The collect to which our attention is now called, consists of two petitions—the first of a more general, and the second of a more specific nature. The general petition implores divine regard to the desires of God's humble servants,

* Hooker's Eccles. Pol. vol. iii. p. 180, Oxford edit.

in which some important things are taken for granted and made the foundation of the divine regard which is implored.

Our church supposes, in the judgment of charity, which "believeth and hopeth all things" to the utmost bound of rational probability, that those who join in her worship and the use of her collect are "God's humble servants." But though our church forms this charitable opinion of us, surely it becomes us to be jealous of ourselves, and to inquire whether our style of address, in approaching the footstool of the divine Majesty, be consistent with truth. For as all men are either the servants or enemies of God (a neutrality being impossible to be maintained, since our Lord has said, "He that is not with me "is against me"); and, since the time is at hand when all his enemies, who refused to have him for their master, will be brought forth and slain before him (Luke xix. 27); it is of the highest importance, not only to the acceptance of our prayers, but also to the salvation of our souls, that we should determine whether we be "God's "humble servants" or not. The possibility that a single individual should be found, who, with the oily words of submission to divine authority on his lips, maintains in his heart and conduct a spirit of hostility to the divine government, is a very awful consideration.

In a certain sense, all creatures, not excepting even the devils, serve God; for they must all ultimately subserve the purposes of his will. Not only do "fire and hail, snow and vapour, "and the stormy wind fulfil his word," but wicked spirits and wicked men, without design, accomplish his purposes and promote his glory. The temptation of man in paradise made way

for the introduction of redemption; and every subsequent act of that opposition to God and his people, which the powers of darkness make, is over-ruled by divine wisdom and power, for the furtherance of their sanctification and his honour. In like manner, when Joseph's brethren through envy and malice sold the future governor of Egypt to the Ishmaelites, they fulfilled thereby the design of divine Providence; for "God sent "him thither to preserve life," (Gen. xlv. 5,) so that on their atrocious act a long train of most important consequences depended, which a finite mind can trace only in part. Thus also the Assyrian monarch, though he meant not so, was the rod of God's anger, the instrument of doing his will. Isa. x. 5–7. And thus also the Messiah was "delivered by the determinate counsel "and foreknowledge of God," though "wicked "hands took and slew him." Acts ii. 23. And all evil doers, whether embodied or unembodied, must finally exhibit the righteousness and holiness of God by their sufferings in hell, being made eternal monuments of his praise.

But it is in a very different light that we view ourselves, when in our collect we profess ourselves to be "God's humble servants," for the service of which we speak is of a voluntary nature. It is a devotion of heart, a state of self-consecration to the divine will, producing a devotion of life and conduct, which we profess. Let us examine ourselves then, that we may ascertain whether the language which we hold be sincere, remembering that empty compliments will not pass current before the throne of Omniscience which searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men. Are we indeed humbled under a sense of the Majesty

of that Master whom we profess to serve? Doth a reverential awe of him pervade and influence our daily walk? Have we any due apprehensions of our unworthiness, both as creatures and as sinners, to be the servants of so great a Lord? Do a fear of offending him, and a desire of pleasing him in all things, prevail habitually within our bosoms? If we are indeed his "humble "servants," the tenderness of our consciences and the circumspection of our behaviour will prove our attachment to him and our reverence of his name, in a thousand circumstances which an unawakened mind treats with indifference. A holy anxiety to avoid even the appearance of evil, that is, of rebellion against his commands and disobedience to his will, of hostility to his service, or even a want of love to it and zeal in it, will afford daily proof that we speak the language of truth, when we call ourselves his humble servants. A "testimony that we please God" will be the grand object of pious ambition, which will outweigh every consideration arising from the opinion which may be formed either by the world around us, or by our fellow-servants in the church of God. As "God's humble servants," we shall "be obedient to him who is our Master, "with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart; "not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as "the servants of Christ, doing the will of God "from the heart; with good will doing service, "as to the Lord, and not to men."

It is further supposed (and the supposition is founded), that the bosoms of all God's humble servants are occupied by hearty desires after spiritual blessings. To the desires of their hearts they are therefore taught to pray for divine regard. But oh! what gross hypocrisy is this,

if our souls be unconscious of any eagerness to obtain and enjoy what God has promised and what our lips implore! "Desire is the uneasiness "a man finds in himself upon the absence of any "thing whose present enjoyment carries the idea "of delight with it*." Now is such an uneasiness in any measure excited within our souls? To join in a form of prayer, and to feel the spirit of prayer, are things widely different from each other.

Should an inquiry be started respecting the complex object of those desires which are formed in all the bosoms of God's humble servants, a reference may be made to the "exceedingly "great and precious promises" of the Gospel, which will solve the question. For the Spirit of God excites hunger and thirst after those blessings which are provided for his people in Jesus Christ. By a comparison therefore of our sensibilities with the provisions of the Gospel, we may ascertain whether "the Spirit maketh intercession for "us with groanings that cannot be uttered," and whether we are honest in "soliciting regard to "our hearty desires." Of those various wants, to the relief of which divine mercy is here implored, we have a schedule or inventory in the prayers of our church. Let us examine it attentively, and see if they express our "hearty "desires." These, if an epitome of them be required, may all be summed up in a restoration of the favour, the likeness and enjoyment of God.

In soliciting divine regard to our "hearty "desires," we have strong ground of confidence. For God himself is the author of those desires, since "all holy desires proceed from him." The blessings we covet are all purchased blessings, for

* Locke.

which an adequate price has been paid; so that on all the promissory notes which the treasurer of the bank of heaven has issued to God's humble servants, the words, *Value received*, are written in legible characters. The communication of those blessings, for which the awakened bosom is athirst, will bring honour to the Author of redemption, to the faithfulness of God who hath covenanted to bestow them, and to the grace of his Spirit who hath excited the desire after them. We desire nothing but what is promised to us; and the promises of God are so many bonds, for the fulfilment of which he hath, as it were, pledged to us the honour of all his divine perfections: and our desires are therefore the claim of a specialty debt, and can never be disappointed. The Lord "will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry and will save them." Psal. cxlv. 19. Our own experience, and that of a great cloud of witnesses, will prove, that "not one thing fails of all the good things which "the Lord our God hath promised concerning "us; all are come to pass unto us, and not one "thing hath failed thereof."

The second petition of our collect is of a more specific form, and describes the nature of the blessing which it implores. We beseech "Al-"mighty God" to "stretch forth the right hand "of his Majesty to be our defence against all our "enemies, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Gospel which is annexed to our collect, leads to a conclusion that our spiritual enemies are chiefly intended in it. And, indeed, these will always occupy the chief attention of those worshippers who are humbly engaged in the service of God. For though, in times like those in which we live, we have need to pray mightily for

divine help against our national foes, and though every Christian has outward enemies from which the shield of Omnipotence alone can defend him, yet these are of inferior importance compared with those which war against his soul, and excite a less degree of anxiety within his breast. It is moreover to be observed that our collect is designed for stated and congregational use, and must therefore refer to a warfare that is never interrupted, and in which all who are required to join in our prayers are perpetually engaged.

Of our spiritual enemies St. Paul has given us a most alarming representation, (Eph. vi. 12.) He reminds us that we fight not against flesh and blood, "but against principalities and powers, "against the rulers of the darkness of this world, "against wicked spirits." Their nature, number, subtilty, power, and malice, are considerations truly formidable. And the object contended for, the salvation of our own souls, is so immensely valuable, that we may well call on "Almighty "God" to "stretch forth the right hand of his "Majesty to be our defence against all our "enemies."

That it is only the almighty power of God that can keep us from sin, will appear, if we consider either our enemies or ourselves.

"First, consider the mighty advantages that "our great enemy, the devil, hath against us. "As he is a spirit, he is both powerful and subtle; "and both these are whetted by his great malice "against us. Long experience also, for above "five thousand years, hath made him very politic "in dealing with souls, and in carrying on his "own designs and interest. He knows our "temper, our passions, and our inclinations; and "can chuse and cull out those objects which shall

" infallibly strike and affect us. He waits those " *mollia tempora fandi*, those easy hours of " whispering his suggestions to us, when we are " most facile and compliant, when we are most " easily wrought upon, and made soft to his " hands by some foregoing circumstances. And " if, after all this, he despairs to prevail upon us " as a *devil*, he can quickly shift his shape, and " transform himself into *an angel of light*, and " engage our very consciences unto evil. He " can disguise his temptations into impulses of " the *Holy Spirit*, persuade us that what he " prompts us to is our duty, head his *fiery darts* " with *Scripture sentences*, wrap up his poison " in the leaves of the *Bible*, and wound our souls " by our consciences. And certainly this *devil* " of light is now gone abroad into the world with " all that power of deceivableness he can, and we " cannot but with sad and bleeding hearts observe " his too general prevalency and success. And, " besides all this, he is continually present with " us, follows us up and down wherever we go, " and is always at our elbow to prompt us to evil, " and at our right hand to oppose us in that " which is good. *Hell* hath *emissaries* enough " to afford every man a *friend* for his attendant; " and these critically observe every glance of " thine eyes, every flash of thy passions, and are " presently ready to apply suitable *temptations* " unto thee, and to strike thee in that part of thy " soul which is softest and most yielding. And " as the *Syrians* that were sent by *Benhadad* to " the *King of Israel*, to intercede for him, " watched every word that should fall from his " mouth, that they might lay hold of it to obtain " farther favour from him; so these *spies* of *hell* " do watch every kind word and every kind look

" of thine towards sin, and want no skill to im-
" prove them, to obtain yet greater matters from
" thee. Now if God did not appear to deliver us
" from these subtle *wiles* and *methods* of the *devil*,
" how soon would he make fools of the wisest and
" most experienced Christians!

" Secondly, consider the mighty disadvantages
" that we lie under to oppose the *temptations* of
" the *devil;* of which though they be many and
" great, yet I shall name but two, which may be
" found even in the best of men.

" *First*, our inadvertency and heedlessness,
" through which we are often surprised into sin,
" and captivated by the cunning craftiness of our
" enemies which lie in wait to deceive. How
" seldom is it that we stand upon our guard, or
" if we do, that we are completely armed!
" Sometimes our *shield*, sometimes our *helmet*,
" sometimes our *sword* of the *Spirit* is wanting.
" How seldom is it that we attend all the motions
" of the enemy! Indeed a Christian should look
" round about him, for he is every where beset
" and encompassed round about with enemies;
" and whilst he is vigilant toward one part, the
" *devil* falsifies his thrust and wounds him in
" another. But if he cannot wound on the
" right hand by *presumption*, he will try what he
" can do on the left by *despair*. If he cannot
" prevail by his *temptations* to cause us to neglect
" and cast off holy duties, he will *tempt* us to
" pride ourselves in the well-performing of them.
" If he cannot make us fall, he will tempt us to be
" high-minded because we stand, and so make our
" very standing the occasion of our woeful down-
" fall; and because we are apt to think ourselves
" better than others, he will tempt us to be super-
" cilious despisers and contemners of others.

"Now, O Christian, it is a very hard matter, "and thou wilt find it so, thus to turn thee about "to every assault; and that man had need to have "his spiritual senses well exercised that shall be "able dexterously to do it. Now, when so great "circumspection is scarce sufficient for our secu-"rity, how can they possibly escape without "fearful wounds and gashes in their consciences, "who are supinely negligent of their souls, and "mind not which way their thoughts, their pas-"sions, their affections incline, and so give the "devil a handle to turn their souls by which way "he will! Certainly if we do not buckle our "*spiritual armour* close to us, but suffer the "joints of it, by our heedlessness, to lie open, the "devil may easily wound us wheresoever and in "whatsoever part he pleaseth. And truly if, "through this inadvertency and want of circum-"spection, Adam in the state of innocency and "the state of uprightness fell, when the devil "had no immediate access or admission into the "inward faculties or powers of his soul—yet if "Satan, who was but a young, unpractised, and "inexperienced devil, could prevail with him by "his wiles to ruin himself and to betray the great "trust which God had deposited in his hands for "all his posterity,—how much greater, may we "think, is his advantage over us, into whom he "may insinuate himself and his temptations, and, "when we are busy about other things, strike and "wound us at unawares.

"*Secondly*, besides this inadvertency, the devil "hath another grand advantage to lead us into "evil, and that is, because we are naturally prone "and inclined of ourselves to those very sins to "which he tempts us. It is very hard for that "place to escape that hath enemies without and

"traitors within. So stands the case with us, "we are not only beleagured, but betrayed; "there are in our hearts multitudes of lusts that "hold intelligence with the devil and espouse "his cause. Yea, there is no one sin, how vile "and profligate soever, but it may find partisans "in our base and wicked hearts, wherein are the "seeds and principles of all impieties; and there- "fore as things of a like nature presently con- "corporate (as we see one drop of water diffuseth "itself and runneth into another), so temptations "to sin, meeting with a sinful nature, are pre- "sently entertained, and as it were embodied "together; for whilst we pursue what Satan "tempts us unto, we do but pursue what our "own natural lusts and corruptions inclined unto "before, waiting only for an opportunity of being "called forth into act.

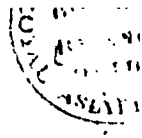
"And therefore, considering both the advan- "tages the devil hath against us, and the great "disadvantages under which we lie, (he a spirit, "we but flesh—he wise and subtle, we foolish "and ignorant—he experienced, we raw and "unpractised—he diligent and watchful, we "careless and negligent—he laying a close siege "to us without, and we betraying ourselves "within)—it must needs be ascribed only to the "goodness and grace of God to deliver us from "the commission of that evil, to which we are "so fiercely and cunningly tempted*."

In a situation so helpless as ours, and under circumstances apparently so desperate, what hope of safety or deliverance can arise? None, assuredly, from any exertion of our own wisdom or strength. But "the right hand of God's

* Bishop Hopkins on the Lord's Prayer.

"Majesty" is all-sufficient for our defence, if it be employed on our behalf. The Apostle, therefore, after that he has exhorted Christian believers to the use of that armour which is provided for them, as a concluding piece of advice directs them to "pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and to watch thereunto with all perseverance." With this injunction the fervent use of our collect is an act of compliance. Let the reader thus call on God for defence, not only at the stated times of public worship, but also when he sitteth in the house, and when he walketh in the way, when he lieth down, and when he riseth up. For not a moment occurs in which he is free from imminent danger, unless the right hand of the divine Majesty be stretched forth for his defence.

While we are offering up in sincerity the prayer which is here provided for our use, let us rest satisfied, that "when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him," and that "our God will bruise Satan under our feet shortly." Our prayer is addressed to "*Almighty God.*" It is offered in his name, who hath conquered for us all the powers of darkness; and, through him that loved us, we also shall be made more than conquerors in all our conflicts, and shall attain the palm of victory.



THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE divine declaration, which is made by the pen of the prophet Hosea, is equally applicable to all mankind as it was to the ancient Israelites: —"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in "me is thy help." For we have all, without a single exception, "erred and strayed from God's "ways like lost sheep. We have all followed "the devices and desires of our own" corrupt "hearts" in opposition to the will of God. "We "have all offended against his holy laws." And we are all obliged, after a recital of every commandment, to cry, "Lord, have mercy upon us;" for "we have provoked most justly thy wrath "and indignation against us."

The fallen state of man, and the redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ, are the two grand topics of divine revelation, and surely they are the most interesting subjects which can be proposed to a rational, sinful, and immortal creature. But, alas, there are multitudes of persons, even in the midst of this Christian country, who are utterly ignorant both of their woe and weal—of their misery by nature and of the great salvation which

is provided and revealed in the Gospel. "What "shall I eat, what shall I drink, and wherewithal "shall I be clothed," are the questions which have engrossed the whole of their attention; while the all-important inquiry, "What shall I do to be "saved," has never occupied a serious thought. And even among those persons who are well informed in the theory of divine truth, there are many who know nothing more than the theory. They have no clearer conceptions of it than a blind man would have of light and colours, to whom some friend had communicated, through the organ of hearing, the system of philosophy. It may moreover be observed, that those who have been taught of God, and in consequence of divine instruction have been brought to an experimental acquaintance with the doctrines of the Gospel, need to be continually reminded of them. For so treacherous is the sinful heart of man, that, as inscriptions made on the sand of the sea-shore, are in danger of being obliterated by the next returning wave, so every religious impression is liable to be erased from the human breast by the next worldly object that is presented, unless God is pleased to perpetuate and deepen it by his word and Spirit.

That man is a lost sinner, and that his salvation must be wholly of and from God—that man has destroyed himself by sin, and is incapable of becoming his own saviour; insomuch that if he be delivered from the wrath to come, and be restored to the favour and image of God, his deliverance and restoration, in their rise, progress, and accomplishment, must be the effects of infinite mercy and almighty power—these are the leading truths of divine revelation, which are inculcated, in different modes of speech and in

various striking images, throughout every part of the Bible.

These truths, which are thus proclaimed and enforced in the Scriptures, are incorporated with every page of our national liturgy, and form the basis of every act of worship which is prescribed for our use. What the book of Revelation teaches us to believe, the book of Common Prayer teaches us to practise. In that repentance and faith are described, in this they are acted. In that we learn our need of salvation and the way of obtaining it; in this we reach out our hand, and take of the fruit of the tree of life—we eat, and live for ever.

The collect for the fourth Sunday in Lent may be considered as an epitome of the liturgy; it is a compendious repetition of all those acts of repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ which are elsewhere enjoined. It is an echo of the voice of God, which cries, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." We cannot, therefore, dispute the truth of those declarations which the Scriptures make about our misery by nature, without falsifying the devotional avowal of our own lips, and proving ourselves to be hypocrites in our solemn acts of worship.

Our collect consists of—a humble confession that "we worthily deserve to be punished,"—and an earnest petition, that "by the comfort of "God's grace we may mercifully be relieved, "through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

This confession is made by all those persons who join in our service. It is designed for the use of all the members of our church; not only of those who have been gross transgressors of the divine law, but of those also who have

"escaped the pollution which is in the world "through lust." And it is with the strictest propriety adapted to the lips of all men; for though there is a difference in the degrees of guilt which men have contracted, there is no distinction of innocent and guilty persons, since "all have sinned and come short of the glory of "God." And though the degree of punishment apportioned to the measures of guilt will certainly vary, yet in all instances the "wages of sin is "death" everlasting; and "if we say that we "have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the "truth is not in us." Two inquiries will free this confession from all ambiguity, and enable us to determine whether we have been honest in making it or not.

The first question that arises from this confession relates to the extent of that punishment which we acknowledge that we have deserved. And on the answer which we give to this question will depend the degree of humiliation we shall feel while we avow our guilt, and the degree of earnestness with which we shall implore relief. Now, unassisted reason can make no satisfactory reply to this inquiry, because it cannot ascertain the malignity of sin, nor duly appreciate its demerit. Human reason, in its present fallen state, enveloped in thick mists of ignorance and biassed by self-love, is sure to form a wrong estimate on this, and indeed on every other theological question. To the solution of the question proposed Omniscience alone is competent, because it depends on the nature of God against whom we have transgressed—on the quality of our obligations to him as our Creator and Law-giver—and on the natural powers bestowed on man in his creation-state,

before sin had impaired them; for the law considers man as created and not as fallen in its requisition of obedience and denunciation of wrath. Now these are topics which no finite understanding can fully comprehend, and much less the feeble and diseased mind of corrupted creatures who occupy this mole-hill, the earth. But what reason cannot determine, God hath made known in his word, and "we know that "the judgment of God is according to truth." The punishment which sin, in all cases, hath "worthily deserved," is declared to be eternal in its duration, and tremendous in its nature. Scripture images afford us some faint ideas of it; but all the ideas that we form of it must necessarily be very inadequate to the reality. However, the demerit of sin and the extent of the punishment which it deserves, as they are manifested by the denunciations of divine wrath in the Scriptures, by the nature of the remedy which hath been provided, by the forebodings and foretastes which some impenitent sinners have felt and expressed in the present life, and by the tortures of an awakened conscience under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, are calculated to rouse our fears to the highest pitch of intenseness, and to hasten our escape "from the wrath to come."

The second question relates to the meritorious cause of the punishment which we deprecate. This has, of necessity, been already pointed out; but it requires a more particular consideration. An answer to it is suggested in our collect, in which we avow that "we deserve to be punished "*for our evil deeds*." And it is to be observed that our church, in order that there might be no possibility of prevarication or evasion in the language of her members, has added to the verb in

which the confession is couched an adverb of the same meaning, for the purpose of strengthening the avowal of guilt, and of pointing out more fully, the condign nature of that punishment which is threatened and to which we are all exposed. "We *worthily* deserve to be punished." All sin, as being a breach of the divine law, justly incurs the threatened curse by which that law has been sanctioned. Adam, by his first transgression, "worthily deserved" it for himself; and, as a fœderal head, for all his posterity. And though the act of which he was guilty may appear to have been of small consequence, it was a contempt of divine goodness, a denial of divine veracity, a rejection of divine authority, and an invasion of divine prerogatives. It comprehended within itself every species of sin which has since been committed, and was a complicated violation of all the precepts of both tables of the law. Our derived pollution moreover exposes us to the penalty of the divine law, for "concupiscence "and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." But our collect only notices our actual trangressions, and among these only "*our evil deeds*," because these are sufficient to prove us guilty and leave us in self-despair. "We have *done* what we "ought not to have done." It is not necessary that the reader should charge himself with murder, adultery, theft, or drunkenness, in order to justify the confession which he makes; for all tendencies to an act prohibited by the law are included in the prohibition, and incur the penalty annexed to it. "Whosoever is angry with "his brother without a cause is in danger of "the judgment; and whosoever looketh on a "woman, to lust after her, hath committed adul-"tery with her already in his heart."

" Impenitent and unpardoned sinners shall lie " eternally in prison and be eternally satisfying " the offended justice of God; but in all that " eternity there shall never be that moment " wherein they may say, as Christ did in his " making satisfaction, *It is finished*, the debt is " paid, and justice hath received as much as was " due from me. No, that satisfaction must be " eternally making; and therefore the punish- " ment must be eternally lasting. For every " sin, even the least sin, is committed against an " infinite God; and therefore the punishment of " it must be infinite: for offences take their mea- " sures, as well from the dignity of the person " against whom they are committed, as from the " heinousness of the fact itself considered. As " a reviling word against the *king* is treasonable, " against our equals but actionable; and therefore " by the same proportion, the same offence against " the infinite majesty of the great God, must " needs carry infinite guilt in it; that is, it ex- " poseth to infinite punishment.

" Now then, O sinner, think with thyself, " what satisfaction thou canst make to God that " can bear a proportion to thy infinite offences. " Thou canst not at once undergo an infinite " measure of punishment, for thy nature is but " finite. Couldst thou do this, then indeed " there were hope, yea, certainly of relief for " thee; for divine justice will not exact more " than its due. But because this is impossible, " thy woes and torments in hell must be eternal, " that they may be some way infinite as the jus- " tice is which thou hast offended; infinite, if not " in degrees, yet in duration and continuance.

" And O what dreadful despair will this cause " in thee, when thou shalt have been in hell

"under most acute and insufferable torments "millions of years, and yet the payment of all "that sum of plagues and woes shall not be of "value enough to satisfy for the least of thy sins, "nor to cross out of God's book the least and "smallest of thy debts: but thy account shall be "as great and as full as it was at thy first plunging "into hell, and still an eternity of torments "remains to be paid by thee!

"And now, wretched creatures that we are, "whither shall we turn ourselves? What hope, "what relief can we find? Shall we flatter our-"selves that God will not require our sins at our "hands? No: they are debts, and therefore he "may; and he is a just God, just to himself and "to the interest of his own glory, and therefore "he will. God hath beforehand told us at what "rate we must expect to take up our sins, and "what we must pay for them at the last. He "hath told us, as plainly as the mouth of truth can "utter it, that 'the wages of sin is death*.'"

That "the wages of sin is death" eternal, is plainly taught in the Scriptures and in the articles and homilies of our church. O that these were better known! They would afford the best comment on our liturgy, and would prove who are churchmen and who are not. The ignorance of the standard-writings of our church which generally prevails, is a reproach to those who boast of their attachment to her constitution.

Before we proceed to consider the second part of our collect, let us pause and inquire whether we have felt the force of our own confessions or not. "For our evil deeds we worthily deserve "to be punished." Doth this correspond with

* Bishop Hopkins on the Lord's Prayer, p. 85.

the conviction of our consciences and with the habitual frame of our minds? O let us not deceive ourselves in the use of "a form of sound "words," for God searcheth the heart. How awful are the general insensibility and hypocrisy which prevail in our church! We repeat creeds, make confessions, and utter prayers, with as much carelessness as we read an anecdote in a newspaper, or recite some trifling occurrence in which we are utterly uninterested. Confession without contrition, and prayer without desire, are a mockery of God.

Our collect, in the second place, contains an earnest request founded on the foregoing confession. We pray "that by the comfort of divine "grace we may mercifully be relieved, through "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Distress of conscience, arising from a sense of guilt and obnoxiousness to punishment, is evidently supposed in all those who offer up this prayer; for to this the relief which is implored relates. Are our consciences then wounded by a conviction of sin? And are we indeed solicitous for relief? It is a scriptural axiom, that "they who are whole need not a physician, but "they" only "who are sick." If the reader's confession has been sincere, the use of our collect will prove "an outlet of trouble, and an inlet "of consolation."

The relief which we implore is a deliverance from guilt and the fear of punishment, including a restoration to peace with God and an assurance of his favour. And oh, how important a request! for in God's favour is life, and in nothing else. And this relief is asked of God with the highest propriety, since he only can afford it. Of the maxims of philosophy, the rules of ethics, and the

directions of the divine law, we may truly assert, that, with respect to the relief of a burthened conscience, they are medicines of no virtue, and that those who prescribe them are, like Job's friends, "physicians of no value" and "miserable "comforters." There is, however, blessed be God, "balm in Gilead, and a Physician there." But even the balm of Gilead cannot relieve the sin-sick soul unless it be applied; and no one can effectually apply it but the great Physician. The minister of the Gospel may promulgate the doctrines of grace, but he cannot give "the comfort "of God's grace." This must be sought from God, whose Spirit must communicate its influence to the afflicted heart.

The source from which this relief is implored is "the comfort of divine grace." And to this we may indeed look with a confident persuasion that we shall not be disappointed. For it has made a full provision for our everlasting consolation. A revelation of this grace to the soul removes all its distresses by removing their cause, even sin. And we are assured that, "if we "confess our sins," as we do in the sincere use of our collect, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrigh-"teousness." Let those, then, who are truly conscious that they have "worthily deserved to "be punished," raise their eyes to the throne of grace. There, and there only, is comfort to be obtained. There God "waiteth to be gracious." Let them remember that God can be "just and "the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." And oh, "what abundant cause of comfort may "this be to all true believers, that God's justice "as well as his mercy shall acquit them: that "that attribute of God, at the apprehension of

" which they were wont to tremble, should inter-
" pose on their behalf and plead for them! Yet
" through the all-sufficient expiation and atone-
" ment that Christ hath made for our sins, this
" mystery is effected, and justice itself brought
" over from being a formidable adversary to be
" of our party and to plead for us. Therefore the
" Apostle tells us, 1 John i. 9, that God is faith-
" ful and just to forgive us our sins*."

The channel through which the comfort of divine grace must flow for our relief is "our "Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The channel is wide and deep, so that we need not fear lest the supply should be a scanty one. He is the only medium through which any gracious communication can be made to a sinner; and through him penitent sinners may expect to receive more than they can ask or think—they may expect " abundance of grace and of the gift of righteous-
" ness."—" In him God findeth us, if we be faith-
" ful, for by faith we are incorporated into Christ.
" Then, although in ourselves we be altogether
" sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man which
" is impious in himself, full of iniquity, full of
" sin—him being found in Christ through faith,
" and having his sin remitted through repent-
" ance—him God beholdeth with a gracious eye,
" putteth away his sin by not imputing it, taketh
" quite away the punishment due thereunto, by
" pardoning it, and accepteth him in Christ
" Jesus, as perfectly righteous, as if he had ful-
" filled all that was commanded him in the law!
" shall I say, more perfectly righteous, than if
" himself had fulfilled the whole law? I must
" take heed what I say: but the Apostle saith,

* Bishop Hopkins on the Lord's Prayer.

"'*God made him to be sin for us, who knew no*
"'*sin; that we might be made the righteousness*
"'*of God in him.*' Such we are in the sight of
"God the Father, as is the very Son of God him-
"self. Let it be counted folly, or frenzy, or fury,
"whatsoever; it is our comfort, and our wisdom;
"we care for no knowledge in the world but
"this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suf-
"fered; that God hath made himself the son of
"man, and that men are made the righteousness
"of God*."

* Hooker's Works, vol. iii. p. 437, Oxford edition.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WE have already observed, in the course of these Lectures, the harmony which prevails in the prayers of the church in different ages of the world, and in different outward circumstances. And though there is nothing wonderful in this coincidence, because the wants of God's children are always the same essentially, and the same Spirit maketh intercession for them; yet as the remark may tend to encourage, strengthen, and confirm our souls in the faith, and in our approaches to the throne of grace, it may not be unprofitable to point out the resemblance between the language of our collect for the fifth Sunday in Lent, and that of the Psalmist (Psal. cxix. 132, 133); "Look thou upon me, and be merciful "unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that "love thy name. Order my steps in thy word, "and let not any iniquity have dominion over "me."

The prayer both of our collect and the Psalmist is the cry of distress, as indeed, in a greater or less degree, all prayer must necessarily be. In both, the awakened sinner, feeling himself to be a guilty creature, implores mercy; being conscious of his ignorance, he solicits direction; being

sensible of his own helplessness, he begs assistance; and proving by daily experience that he is prone to evil, he asks from God that preservation which God only can afford. His plea for the attainment of these inestimable blessings is that mercy which God has promised to his people, and which he is accustomed to "shew unto "those that love his name." In the promises of the divine word, and in the examples of those to whom mercy has been vouchsafed in similar circumstances, the penitent finds encouragement to address the throne of grace.

Our collect contains—a general petition for divine regard—and the specific end for which that regard is now implored.

In the general petition for divine regard we may consider—the manner in which it is made—the matter of which it consists—and the objects for whom it is solicited.

The manner of supplication here adopted is very fervent and very humble. And indeed such is the nature of the blessings which we implore, so great is our unworthiness of them, and so glorious the majesty of him from whom we ask them, that too great a degree of fervency and humility cannot be manifested either in our words or gestures, nor exerted within our bosoms. Let us then ask ourselves whether our feelings have corresponded, in the use of this collect, with its phraseology. Have we besought "Almighty "God mercifully to look upon his people," making his mercy our sole plea, and determining not to let him go with whom we are wrestling for a blessing, until he bless us? As the mode of supplication here introduced has occurred in a former collect, we shall no further enlarge upon it. The reader's attention is, however, requested

to the following excellent remarks on prayer, by the judicious Hooker.

"Prayer proceedeth from want, which being "seriously laid to heart maketh suppliants always "importunate; which importunity our Saviour "Christ did not only tolerate in the woman of "Canaan, but also exhort and invite thereunto, "as the parable of the wicked judge sheweth. "Our fervency sheweth us sincerely affected "towards that we crave: but that which must "make us capable thereof is an humble spirit; "for God doth load with his grace the lowly, "when the proud he sendeth empty away: And "therefore, to the end that all generations of the "world might know how much it standeth them "upon to beware of all lofty and vain conceits "when we offer up our supplications before him, "he hath in the Gospel both delivered this caveat, "and left it by a special chosen parable exem- "plified. The Pharisee and publican having "presented themselves in one and the same place, "the temple of God, for performance of one and "the same duty, the duty of prayer, did, not- "withstanding, in that respect only so far differ "the one from the other, that our Lord's own "verdict of them remaineth (as you know) on "record, *they departed home*, the sinful publican, "through humility of prayer, just; the just "Pharisee, through pride, sinful; so much better "doth he accept of a contrite *peccavi*, *I have* "*sinned*, than of an arrogant *Deo gratias*, *God* "*I thank thee**."

We proceed now to consider the matter of our request. We solicit divine regard with a view to a specific end which is afterwards mentioned.

* Hooker's Works, vol. iii. p. 589, Oxford edition.

But, it may be said, Doth not God "look upon" all his creatures? Is he not omniscient and omnipresent? Are not his "eyes in every place, "beholding the evil and the good?"—"Can any "hide himself in secret places, that the Lord "shall not see him? Doth not he fill heaven "and earth?"—"Is not hell naked before him, "and destruction without covering?" Yes: "his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he "seeth all his goings."—"There is no darkness "nor shadow of death, where the workers of "iniquity may hide themselves."—"The Lord "looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the sons "of men. From the place of his habitation he "looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. "He fashioneth their hearts alike; he consider-"eth all their works."—"Great in counsel and "mighty in work, his eyes are open upon all the "ways of the sons of men, to give every one "according to his ways, and according to the "fruit of his doings." What need then, it may be asked, is there of soliciting divine notice, since God cannot but know and regard us? Is not the request superfluous and impertinent? By no means. For it is not a naked regard, but a favourable and fruitful attention which we implore—not the notice of an indifferent spectator, but that of an interested friend. It is a gracious interference in our behalf which we beseech God to shew.

There is a consciousness in the bosoms of all God's people, that, were he to "look upon" them in a way of strict justice, his observance of their state and conduct would be followed by their destruction. For they know that they have to do with a just and holy God, who is "of purer "eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on

" iniquity," and who " will by no means clear " the guilty." They know " that their God is " a consuming fire," and that " it is a fearful " thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And therefore the habitual remembrance of God which they maintain is accompanied with a consideration of his mercy, and a grateful affiance in the Mediator through whom it flows. " Enter " not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; " for in thy sight shall no man living be justified," is the constant language of the awakened bosom. With this the sensibilities of those who enter into the spirit of our petition concur, while they " beseech Almighty God mercifully to look upon " his people."

The ungodly heart that is conscious of guilt, but at the same time is unsubdued, unhumbled, and unacquainted with divine mercy, wishes to have nothing to do with God. All unconverted persons " say unto God" in their hearts, if not with their lips, " Depart from us, for we desire " not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the " Almighty that we should serve him? And " what profit should we have if we pray unto " him?" They comfort themselves in their state of alienation from God with the delusive hope that " the Lord will not see, neither will the God " of Jacob regard." If an unwelcome thought of God intrude, that is in any degree of accordance with those attributes which are ascribed to him in his word, it is necessarily productive of terror and dismay, and dismissed with all possible speed. But the kind regard of Almighty God is essential to the comfort of his own people. Instead of saying, " Depart from me," they cry, " Hear me, O Lord, for thy loving kindness is " good; turn unto me according to the multitude

" of thy tender mercies. And hide not thy face " from thy servant, for I am in trouble: hear me " speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem " it: deliver me because of mine enemies." The omniscience and omnipresence of God constitute, in connexion with his grace, the source of all the satisfactions of his people. " In him," with respect to natural and spiritual life, " they live " and move and have their being."

The objects to whom divine regard is implored in our collect are the people of God. Thereby the congregation when offering up this petition mean themselves, and with themselves associate all their brethren, who together with them " worship God in the spirit, rejoice in " Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the " flesh." For it is divinely ordained that prayer should be made " for all men," and especially for " them who are of the household of faith."

But are we indeed *the people of God?* Is our language accurate when we so denominate ourselves? The question is of the last importance; for " God hath respect unto the lowly, but the " proud he knoweth afar off:" and lowliness of heart is one of the grand characteristics of his people, whereby they are distinguished from all other persons. " To this man will I look," saith he whose favourable regard we implore, " even " to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and " that trembleth at my word." Reader, are the distinguishing features of the people of God visible in you and me? There are other properties assigned to his people, which cannot be mistaken, the mention of which may assist our inquiry into our own personal relation to God. His people believe in him, fear him, love him, hope in him, obey him, submit to him, derive their happiness

from him, and rejoice in that relation in which they stand to him. Are we then his people or not? For the comfort of the timid believer it may be observed, that all who cordially wish to be his people are certainly such. For that cordial wish implies, in proportion to its vigour, all those characteristic properties which have been enumerated. They are "Israelites indeed, in whom "there is no guile."

Taking it for granted that the reader has legitimately reckoned himself among the people of God, I must desire him to recal to his remembrance some things which are naturally suggested by the title which he hath assumed.

How humiliating is the thought, which our collect suggests? "We are a chosen genera-"tion, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, "that we should shew forth the praises of him "who hath called us out of darkness into his "marvellous light; which in time past were not "a people, but are now the people of God; which "had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained "mercy." Let us recollect what we were by nature, and what we are become through grace. By nature, "we lay among the pots," in a state of the lowest servility and degradation; through grace, we are become "as the wings of a dove, "covered with silver, and her feathers with yel-"low gold." By nature, we were in a state of perdition; but "God hath redeemed our lives "from destruction, and crowned us with loving "kindness and tender mercies." He hath "raised the poor out of the dust, and lifted the "needy from the dunghill, that he might set us "with princes, even with the princes of his "people."—"Happy art thou, O Israel! who is "like unto thee, O people?—saved by the Lord,

" the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of " thine excellency: and thine enemies shall be " found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon " their high places."

" 'Mercifully look upon *thy people.*' There " is a treasure of instruction and comfort wrapt " up in that word, not only more than the pro- " fane world can imagine (for they indeed know " nothing at all of it); but more than they that " are of that number are able to conceive—a Deep " unfathomable. *Thy people.* They are his por- " tion, and he is theirs. He accounts nothing of " all the world beside them, and they of nothing " at all beside him; for them he continues the " world. Many and great are the privileges of his " people, contained in that great charter, the Holy " Scriptures; and rich is that land, where their " inheritance lies; but all flows from this recipro- " cal relation, that *he is their God.* All his power " and wisdom are engaged for their good; how " great and many soever are their enemies they " may well oppose this to all, *he is their God.* " They are sure to be protected and prospered, " and in the end to have full victory. Happy " then 'is that people, whose God is the Lord.' " Psal. xxxiii. 12.*"

What strong ground does a legitimate assumption of this title, of this relation to God, afford for confidence in stating the end for which we implore his favourable regard? For if we are his people, may we not indulge a confident persuasion, that he will "by his great goodness, " govern and preserve us evermore, both in " body and soul, through Jesus Christ our " Lord?"

* Archbishop Leighton on the First Epistle of Peter.

Our prayer comprehends, as hath been observed already, the collective body of God's people. For they are all one body under one head, subjects of the same kingdom, and members of the same society. However they may be distinguished as "Greeks or Jews, barbarians, "Scythians, bond or free, they are all one in "Christ Jesus." And it is therefore the duty and privilege of every Christian to pray for the whole Catholic church, "that it may be governed "and preserved evermore by God's great good-"ness;" that by a pure and powerful dispensation of his word and ordinances, its spirituality may be maintained and increased—its beauty and splendour heightened; that he would raise up and continue a succession of pastors after his own heart, who shall employ the delegated authority which they receive to his glory and the benefit of his church.

But we shall consider the petition more particularly as it respects ourselves in our individual capacity, in which we pray for the everlasting governance and preservation of God's great goodness.

God is the governor and preserver of all creatures which he hath made. For "the kingdom "is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the "nations."—"He preserveth man and beast." But it is a governance and preservation of a special kind which we implore for ourselves. For there is in his government a circle within a circle to which his peculiar regard is confined. He "is the Saviour of all men, but specially of them "that believe."

We beseech Almighty God that we may be "governed by his great goodness." For we know, if we are indeed his subjects, that the laws of his

kingdom are all "holy, just, and good;" and that the administration of them by his hand is uniformly righteous and gracious, and we therefore wish to be wholly under it. This petition relates both to the management of all our outward affairs in the course of his providence, and to the regulation and control of our hearts, thoughts, desires, and affections, by the influence of his Spirit. It is analogous to that request in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it "is heaven." And oh! how clearly is it thy interest, reader, fervently to pray that thou mayest be governed evermore by God's great goodness, both in body and soul! For "think, "O soul, if it be possible to think, how trans- "cendently blessed thy estate shall be, when all "thy thoughts and affections shall be centered in "God for ever, and not the least motion of thy "soul shall so much as twinkle or waver from "the eternal contemplation and fruition of the "infinite Deity. And therefore this our eternal "happiness being wrapped up in doing the will "of God, it highly concerns us to pray, and to "endeavour to do it on earth, so that at length "we may attain to the perfection of doing it in "heaven."

But do we desire, in sincerity and truth, to be wholly under God's governance? Have we considered the mode of his procedure with his people in the course of his providence? Do we acquiesce in all his dealings with us? And do we desire to submit to his will, and to be as clay in the hands of the potter? Have we moreover considered the requisitions of his law? And do we love it, surveying its height and depth, and length and breadth? Is there no exception that we should wish to make to the administration of

his kingdom or its holy code? Is it the earnest desire and endeavour of our souls, that "every "thought should be brought into subjection to "the obedience of Christ," and that "the govern- "ment" should be entirely "on his shoulders?"

We pray, moreover, that by the same almighty goodness we may be "preserved evermore, both "in body and soul." Both stand in need of divine preservation, because both body and soul are exposed to innumerable dangers. Self-defence is impossible to either; but as both have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, we have encouragement in looking to God for the preservation of both unto his everlasting kingdom.

It is not necessary that we should enlarge on this part of our subject, as it has fallen under our notice in a preceding collect; though it is necessary that our prayer for preservation by almighty power and goodness should be frequently repeated, yea retained in constant use. We shall therefore only pause for the purpose of proposing a question on the subject to our own consciences, by asking whether we do indeed desire divine preservation in the full latitude of the expression—whether to be preserved in soul as well as in body, from sin in all its forms as well as from suffering, be the sincere prayer of our hearts. If it be, while we ask it "through Jesus Christ our Lord," we shall obtain it to his glory who ever liveth to sanction our petitions by his effectual "Amen."

THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OUR collect exhibits to our view the Saviour of our sinful souls in that vicarious character which he assumed for us men and for our salvation. And at the same time it places before our eyes a model for our imitation, which by its beauty and perfection is calculated to fix our attention and captivate our hearts. "Christ suffered for us, "leaving us an example that ye should follow his "steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found "in his mouth. Who when he was reviled, "reviled not again; when he suffered, he threat-"ened not; but committed himself to him that "judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 21–23.

Our collect contains—a preface, celebrating the "tender love" of God as it has been discovered in the mission of his only begotten Son to become incarnate and to die for us, and reciting one important end of that mission, *viz.* that Christ might be an influential pattern of humility to all mankind—and a prayer for grace that we may be enabled to imitate his patience now, and

hereafter be made partakers of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

The fountain from which our redemption flows is first described. It originated in God's tender love towards mankind. Vast pains have been taken to discover the sources of the more famous rivers which enrich and beautify the earth. But when the laborious traveller has reached the object of his pursuit, he has found that the most spacious, deep, and rapid torrents take their rise from inconsiderable springs. Witness the result of Mr. Bruce's hazardous expedition to the sources of the Nile. The sight of two diminutive springs constituted the reward which the bold adventurer received for his toil and peril. There is no stream worth tracing to its fountain-head, but "the pure river of the water of life which "proceeds out of the throne of God and of the "Lamb." While we traverse its banks, ascending towards its source, not only is our eye delighted with its beauty, and our strength recruited by drinking of its water, so that we find our reward in our work; but when we reach the point of its origination, we discover a cause adequate to the effect which we before admired. It was of his "tender love towards mankind that "God sent his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to "take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death "upon the cross." No obligation on the part of God, independent of his tender and disinterested love, rendered this act of compassion necessary. No merit, on the part of mankind, claimed any such favour. No congruity in the character of man with that of God afforded the least inducement to it.

It was tender love then to lost mankind which suggested, contrived, and executed the stupen-

dous plan of redemption. It has been perversely said indeed, by men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, for the purpose of blaspheming that Gospel which they hate, that the orthodox doctrine represents the love of God as purchased and procured by the death of the Mediator. But the falsehood of this calumny is apparent. The Bible and our church concur in saying, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only "begotten Son." God tenderly loved mankind as the work of his own hands. And therefore, foreseeing the barrier which the introduction of sin would oppose to the communication of his favour, he determined to "send his Son our "Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our "flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross;" that, in the salvation of sinners, "mercy and truth "might meet together, righteousness and peace "kiss each other."

Oh! reader, it was indeed tender love towards mankind, towards your lost soul, which induced the Father of mercies to send his Son to die for our redemption. David's bitter lamentation over Absalom affords a striking instance of tender love. For, after the death of his rebellious son, "the king was much moved, and went up to "the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as "he went thus he said, O my son Absalom, my "son, my son Absalom: would God I had died "for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"—A mother, rushing headlong into the midst of a raging fire for the purpose of snatching her child from the jaws of death, would afford a still more striking instance of the same parental affection; because the wish of David would in the latter case be carried into effect, so far at least as it could be with the least hope of escaping from

personal destruction. But neither of these instances will bear any comparison with that act of divine love which our collect celebrates. For David's wish was not, and could not be, carried into effect. And if an opportunity of fulfilling it had offered, we know not whether cool reflection might not have repressed the ardour of his affection. And the act of the mother, just described, is not performed under a certainty of personal destruction, but with a hope of escape. And moreover, the object of her tender anxiety is worthy the risk she runs. But God incarnate not only risked, but actually laid down his life. He engaged in the work of redemption on the absolute condition of making himself a sacrifice for sin—a sacrifice for the sins of those who were utterly unworthy of his notice, and from whom he could expect no shadow of return. No addition could be made to the divine felicity by the salvation of man, nor could any diminution of it have resulted from his eternal ruin.

The proof of love to man which our collect describes is the highest that God could give. If he could, consistently with his justice, have pardoned sin without receiving for it any satisfaction, the exertion of his prerogative for this purpose would have afforded a much lower demonstration of the love wherewith he loveth us than redemption has given. That would have cost him nothing; but this demanded the whole treasury of infinite compassion.

We have already discoursed on the incarnation and nativity of our Lord when we reviewed the collect for Christmas day; and therefore we shall not now enlarge on his assumption of our flesh which is mentioned in our present collect. We are now brought by the revolving year near to

that time when we commemorate the concluding act of our Saviour's humiliation, and the great end of his incarnation. We are to follow him by faith, in the course of the ensuing week, to the garden of Gethsemane, where his dying agonies commenced; we are to ascend with him in spirit the mount of Calvary, mingling our tears with those of the daughters of Jerusalem; and, shortly after, we are to receive "the oil of joy "for mourning, and garments of praise for the "spirit of heaviness," while we witness the commencement of his triumphs in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. By a guilty transaction in the garden of Eden paradise was lost: by the glorious work which was begun in the garden at the foot of the mount of Olives, and finished in the garden of Joseph, paradise is restored.

By the collect for to-day our church prepares us to weep with a weeping Saviour and to triumph with our triumphant Lord. The two-fold event of Good Friday and Easter day is incorporated in our collect.

The dignity of the person who was sent on that work of love which our collect describes; his near relation to God who sent him; the errand on which he came; the character of those whose salvation he undertook; these and a thousand other considerations concur to enhance the tenderness of that love which we celebrate, that love which passeth knowledge. But as we shall soon have an opportunity of entering more fully into this subject, we shall not now enlarge on it.

We therefore proceed to a consideration of that important end of Christ's mission which is specified in our collect, and which, though not the principal object of the incarnation and death of Christ, is closely, yea inseparably connected with

that principal object. Christ was sent by his Father to "take upon him our flesh, and to "suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind "might follow the example of his great humi-"lity." That this was not the principal object which divine love had in view, is evident from the general tenour of Scripture, which continually represents atonement to be the chief end of our Lord's work. Yet are there various sects of religionists who deny, or at least place in the back ground of their painting, Christ's expiatory sacrifice, while they exhibit his example as alone worthy of regard. But they labour in vain; for a display of the pattern which Christ hath set for our imitation is a useless task, if unaccompanied with those motives to copy it, which can only be drawn from his atonement. In the charge here brought against those who mutilate the Gospel, not only the Socinian, but also the various classes of mystical theologues, are implicated. Like Prometheus, they may form the figure of a Christian, but they cannot give it animation.

The end however of Christ's coming which our collect specifies, though not the principal, is an essential one, and closely connected with the atonement. For the latter would be of no value to man, unless a conformity to the example of Christ were produced by it. And an imitation of Christ is necessarily produced by a reception of his atonement, for "faith worketh by love."

From among the various graces which were exercised by Christ as a pattern for our imitation, our collect has selected "his great humility," as being that grace to which the season of Lent now observed, and the great day of atonement just at hand, particularly call our attention. And indeed in mentioning this grace of Christ's character our

church has mentioned all his other excellencies. For it supposes and implies every other attribute of his mediatorial office. And if we "follow the "example of his great humility," we shall also follow the example of every other virtue which shone in the heart and life of the God-man. The cluster of Eshcol's grapes which the spies exhibited to the Israelites, though nothing more than a specimen, was a sufficient specimen of the rich productions of Canaan, from which the fertility of the good land might legitimately be inferred. And if we are imitators of Christ's humility, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things "are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatso- "ever things are pure, whatsoever things are "lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," will accompany that imitation. We shall then "add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, know- "ledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to "temperance, patience; and to patience, god- "liness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; "and to brotherly kindness, charity. And if "these things be in us and abound, they will "make us that we shall neither be barren nor "unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus "Christ." Humility is the sap which, pervading every fibre of the Christian violet, produces that odour which is so grateful and acceptable both to God and man.

Now Christ is the great pattern of humility. Of him only it can be said that he "humbled "himself." A creature, as such, however self-abased before God, can sink no lower than his proper station. And much less can a sinner depreciate himself. But Christ voluntarily emptied himself of glory which he possessed, and to which he was justly entitled. Oh, how forcible

then is the Apostolic exhortation! "Let this "mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: "who, being in the form of God, thought it not "robbery to be equal with God; but made him-"self of no reputation, and took upon him the "form of a servant, and was made in the likeness "of men; and being found in fashion as a man, "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto "death, even the death of the cross." Come, reader, let us view our model in his incarnation, his birth, his submission to his parents during his childhood and youth, in his mode of living in the world, in his converse with his outrageous enemies, in his conduct towards his own disciples, and more especially in the last scene of his life; and let us try to imitate him. Hark, every occurrence of his history cries with a loud and distinct tone, "Learn of me, for I am meek "and lowly in heart." "His whole life is our rule. Not his miraculous works; his footsteps "walking on the sea, and such like, they are not "for our following. But his obedience, holiness, "meekness, humility, are our copy which we "should continually study*."

The prayer of our collect which is founded on the foregoing preface is two-fold. For we therein implore divine grace, that we may be enabled to follow the example of Christ's patience;—and that, at length, we may also be partakers of his resurrection.

It may be asked, why is the grace which is mentioned in the petition of our collect different from that which is mentioned in its preface? Why are we taught to specify the humility of Christ as that attribute of his character which

* Leighton.

God would have us to imitate, and then pray that we may follow the example of his patience? In answer to this question it may be said, that the change of terms in our collect will be fully justified when it is considered that patience is the daughter of humility, that the former cannot subsist independent of the latter, and that the strength of our patience is proportioned to the depth of our humility. And as cause and effect cannot be disunited, while we pray for patience we at the same time implore humility; for it is only as we are self-abased that we can bear our trials with submission to the divine will. And it may be remarked further that, by mentioning both the humility and patience of Christ, our church has given a more comprehensive view of the pattern which we are to imitate, than she would have done if our collect had introduced to our notice one only of these divine qualities. Christ was humble, and therefore he was patient under his unparalleled sufferings. He was "meek "and lowly in heart," and therefore could say, in the depth of his distresses, "Father, not my will, "but thine be done." We may, moreover, consider both these graces as called for in an especial manner by the season of Lent which we now observe, and by the requisitions of that holy week on which we are about to enter. For unless we are deeply humbled, we shall not patiently submit to that course of self-mortification, which is at all times necessary and especially at this season.

The example which is set before us is bright and dazzling, so that our minds may be affected in the contemplation of it as our eyes are by looking at the meridian sun. But let us not be discouraged. For "he that aims high, shoots the

" higher for it, though he shoot not so high as he
" aims. This is that which ennobles the spirit
" of a Christian, the propounding of this our
" high pattern, the example of Jesus Christ*."

As no one ever was, or indeed could be, exposed to trials of patience so sharp as those which our Lord Jesus Christ experienced, so no one ever had an opportunity of exercising, or could have exercised if the opportunity had been afforded, so magnanimous a degree of patience as that which we contemplate in our great exemplar. The extent and magnitude of those trials to which patience in any instance is exposed, depend in a great measure on the dignity of the sufferer, the benevolence which he has shewn to those who are the agents in the trial, the innocence of his character, and other considerations of a like kind. Now he who was " led as a lamb
" to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before his
" shearer is dumb, opened not his mouth," was
" God over all blessed for evermore." His errand unto the world was its redemption from everlasting misery. He was holy, harmless, undefiled before God and man, and perfectly guiltless of the crimes with which he was charged. Yet his theophilanthropy was attributed to a love of popularity and a desire of self-exaltation; his benevolent miracles, the reality of which could not be disputed, to a conspiracy with the devil; and his claim to the Messiahship was ridiculed, blasphemed, and rejected. Every day's intercourse with the world which he came to save, brought with it obloquy, contempt, and the bitterest opposition; till at length human bloodhounds glutted their utmost malice on the divine

* Archbishop Leighton on the First Epistle of Peter.

and innocent victim of their furious hatred. Yet under all these circumstances not an impatient or hasty thought, word, or deed, arose in the bosom, escaped from the lips, or tarnished the life, of our inimitable exemplar.

Our collect supposes that we, as the disciples of Christ, "have need of patience," and that our trials are such as render the daily exercise of this grace absolutely necessary. And the supposition is founded in fact, as the experience of every true disciple will testify. Herein are Christians followers of their Lord. Was *he* a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs? *They* have "fellowship with him in his sufferings." Did *his* afflictions call for the continual exercise of patience and submission to the will of God? so also do *their's*. Was *he* harassed with various temptations and incessant opposition from the prince of darkness? So are *they*. Was *he* persecuted by the world? So are *they* likewise in a greater or less degree, for all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. Was *he* exercised with spiritual desertions? Did *he* cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken "me?" *Their* complaints are frequently similar. Had *Christ* to wait for the fulfilment of the divine promises, till he was made perfect through sufferings? and had *he* to look forward to the dark valley of the shadow of death, as necessarily to be passed through before he could enter on his glory? *His disciples* also are waiters for the consolation of Israel, and know that death is the only avenue to life. But he had no forerunner: the path he trod was undistinguished by the track of a single foot. Whereas his disciples, in every step they take, have to mark his footsteps, and those of a great cloud of witnesses who have gone

before them. He trod the wine-press alone, and without a friend to comfort him. Whereas we have his faithful promise that he "will never "leave us nor forsake us."

It is further implied in our collect that we are unable, without the continual aid of divine grace, to "follow the example of our Lord's patience." And this supposition relates to all his disciples, how far soever they may have advanced in the road to Zion. That this supposition also is founded in truth will appear from the history of his disciples in all ages and from our own experience. The most eminent of his followers have fainted under their trials. The faith of Jacob staggered, when he cried "All these things are "against me." Gen. xlii. 36. The meekness of Moses failed, when he wrathfully smote the rock for the purpose of giving water to the perishing Israelites. Numb. xx. 10–12. The patience of Job was exhausted, when he cursed the day of his birth, finding fault with the dispensations of divine Providence. Job iii. 3, &c. David's confidence suffered an interruption, when he yielded to a suggestion that God's promise had failed. Psal. lxxiii. 13, 14; lxxvii. 4. 7–9; cvi. 16. 10, 11. Even the heroic Elijah at one period of his life sat down under a juniper-tree in a state of despondency, and "requested for himself that he "might die," in consequence of the violence of the persecution which then raged. And oh! have not we also been "wearied and faint in our "minds?" Have not our souls also "been dis-"couraged because of the way," the rugged way in which we have been called to walk? Let us afresh "consider him, who endured the contra-"diction of sinners against himself." Let us

" look unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set " before him endured the cross and despised the " shame, and is now sat down on the right hand " of God." Let us look up to his Spirit for an increase of patience, that we may " endure, as " seeing him that is invisible." " In due time " we shall reap if we faint not."

If we put those trials of patience to which we are exposed in the balance with those that Christ endured; if we closely contemplate the manner in which he demeaned himself, and contrast it with the peevishness and fretfulness, the weakness and timidity, the restlessness and discomposure, which we often feel and often manifest; we shall find cause for deep self-abasement in his presence, and shall perceive the wisdom of our church in teaching all her members to pray for grace that they may be enabled to imitate Christ's patience.

In the second part of the petition of our collect we pray that, at length, " we may be made " partakers of Christ's resurrection."

There is a two-fold participation of Christ's resurrection which his redeemed enjoy. First, they are raised, by virtue of union with him, from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. And, secondly, by the power of his resurrection they are raised from the grave to immortal life and glory. Those who offer this prayer are supposed to have felt the former resurrection, and to be waiting for the later in the exercise of faith and prayer.

There is a close connexion between the two-fold petition of our collect. For we must be followers of Christ now, imitators of his humility, patience, and other virtues, if we would have a

founded hope of being partakers of his resurrection hereafter. The wicked, indeed, will rise from their graves; but it will not be by virtue of Christ's resurrection, nor to a participation of his glory. For they will rise "to shame and ever-"lasting contempt."

As another opportunity will soon occur of enlarging on the important subject of the resurrection, we shall dismiss it at present by only observing, that those who are looking up for grace that they may be enabled to "follow the "Lamb whithersoever he goeth," may confidently pray for a participation of his resurrection. For though their bodies must be laid in the grave as that of their Lord was, yet they will remain united to him when separated from their souls, their whole persons being "members of "his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" and shall rise again to participate in the glories of his kingdom. "If we suffer with him, we shall "be also glorified together with him." "This "corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this "mortal shall put on immortality." And "there-"fore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, "immoveable, always abounding in the work of "the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your "labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Before we conclude, let us inquire whether we are imitators of Christ, or whether it be our earnest desire to imitate him. If no such desire prevail in our bosoms, how hypocritical is our use of this collect! For our hearts and lips are at variance when we offer it. If Christ be not our pattern, he is not our Saviour. O let us not deceive ourselves. We are not looking unto Jesus, and receiving the atonement made by his

blood, unless we are fixing our eyes on his example, and earnestly desirous of conformity to him. For the sight of Christ has a transforming tendency; and all who behold, in the glass of the Gospel, "the glory of the Lord, are changed "into the same image from glory to glory, even "as by the Spirit of the Lord."

GOOD FRIDAY.

Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

OUR Lord's passion has been commemorated in his church, by the appropriation of a particular day for that purpose, from the first age of Christianity, as appears by the testimony of Eusebius*. And surely every institution which tends to remind us of redemption, and to keep alive in our hearts a sense of gratitude for those "innumerable benefits which Christ by his precious "blood-shedding hath obtained to us," is recommended to our devout regard by the most forcible considerations. That the observance of this and other holy days is a human ordinance, we cannot disprove. But till it be demonstrated that nothing is lawful in the service of God that is not divinely prescribed, or that there is any impropriety in the means we use for promoting the most important of all concerns, the salvation of our souls, we shall highly value and thankfully comply with the pious requisition of our church.

* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. cap. 17, p. 57;—B. Apost. Const. lib. v. cap. 13.

Our collect for this day commemorates the love of our Saviour Christ in his submission to those sufferings which he endured. It intimates the nature of those sufferings, as penal, vicarious, and propitiatory.—It implores divine regard to those for whom Christ effectually died under the endearing title of the family of God.—And it concludes with an assertion of the subsequent exaltation of Christ to life everlasting and a kingdom that hath no end.

In order that "the exceeding great love of "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" may duly be appreciated, it is necessary to reflect on the voluntary nature of his unparalleled sufferings. This, therefore, our collect notices, by reminding us that he "was contented to be betrayed, "and given up into the hands of wicked men, "and to suffer death upon the cross." Had his passion been the result of necessity, his love to us therein would have been far less apparent. But it was the spontaneous act of his own bosom. The expression of our collect is the same which occurs Psal. xl. 6–8, in the translation of Tyndal and Cŏverdale which we use in our prayer-books. In that passage Christ is the speaker; and addressing himself to his heavenly Father, he says, "Sacrifice and meat-offering "thou wouldest not: but mine ear hast thou "opened. Burnt offerings and sacrifice for sin "hast thou not required: then said I, Lo, I "come. In the volume of the book it is written "of me, that I should fulfil thy will, O my "God: *I am content to do it*, yea, thy law is "within my heart." His destination to suffer and die does not destroy the spontaneity of his sufferings and death; for that destination was the result of his own gracious proposal, from which

he shrank not till it was carried into full effect. "He was set up" as Mediator "from everlast-"ing, from the beginning, or ever the earth "was." And even then his "delights were "with the sons of men," anticipating that work of redemption which he had engaged to perform. And though his death, at the time of its infliction, was violent on the part of man; yet, on his own part it was voluntary. For no man could have taken his life from him, if he had not laid it down of himself. He had power to lay it down, and power to take it again. John x. 18. The whole course of his life, from his incarnation to his expiring groan, demonstrates the ardent desire of fulfilling his work which he felt, and affords a beautiful and lively comment on his own declaration, (Luke xii. 50,) "I have a "baptism to be baptized with; and how am I "straitened till it be accomplished!" He was previously and intimately acquainted with every ingredient of the bitter cup which was prepared for him; and yet he deliberately took it into his hand, and drank it off to the very dregs. He foreknew and foretold the traitorous part which Judas would act; yet he kept him in his family. He reproved Peter sharply for a hint which he dropped in opposition to the favourite object of his compassionate heart. Matt. xvi. 23, &c. During the institution of his supper, in his conversation with his disciples, and in the prayer which he offered, he appears to have been so swallowed up in a concern for the welfare of his disciples, and that of their future converts, as to have thought but little of his own approaching passion. Let those chapters of St. John's gospel, wherein an account is given of this matter be consulted, and the truth of our remark will be

evident. When our Lord had announced to his disciples the person who was to betray him, he hastened the traitor in the execution of his infernal plot. He went to the place whither he was wont to resort, and which was well known to Judas as his favourite retreat, foreknowing that the traitor would seek and find him there. He forbore to exert his power on those who came to seize him, while, by suffering a ray of his divine majesty to escape, he shewed them what he could do. He summoned not a single angel to his rescue out of the myriads which awaited his commands. He reproved Peter for his intemperate zeal, and healed the high priest's servant whom that rash disciple had wounded. When he was brought before Herod, he would not court his favour by the performance of a miracle in his presence, which Herod hoped to have seen, and by which he might probably have interested the king in his behalf. Before the Sanhedrim and in the presence of Pilate, he made no answer to the unjust accusations which were brought against him, but "submitted himself to him that judgeth righteously." To this double silence in the two courts, before which he was successively carried, the prophet Isaiah seems to allude, when, in the same verse he twice repeats the circumstance, that "he opened not his mouth." Isa. liii. 7. Under all the ignominy and torture which he endured previous to his crucifixion, he was passive and patient; for neither the reproaches which were heaped on him, the spitting, the scourge, nor the crown of thorns, extorted from him a single complaint. On his way to Golgotha, he rebuked the women that lamented him, and bade them reserve their tears for the calamities of themselves and

their children. On the cross he prayed for his murderers; and even in the last act of his life, when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, it is evident that the act was altogether spontaneous. His vital powers were not exhausted, for in the previous moment he cried with a loud voice. He voluntarily laid down his life, that he might take it again.

The first branch of that complex act of love which is described in our collect, is our Lord's submission to the treason of Judas: he "was "contented to be betrayed." Of the faithless and perfidious transaction, by which the unoffending benefactor of mankind was given up to his enemies, St. Matthew has given a particular account (chap. xxvi. 47–49), to which the reader is referred. It was no small aggravation of our Lord's sufferings, that he was basely betrayed by one of his own disciples, and sold for thirty pieces of silver. Thus Joseph was sold by his own brethren, and David betrayed by his friend Ahithophel. Of the treason of Ahithophel David complains bitterly in a passage of the forty-first Psalm, (ver. 9,) wherein he personates his great antitype. (John xiii. 18.) He says, "Yea, mine "own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which "did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel "against me." The combination of fraud and force which attended our Saviour's arrest in the garden, was a very galling addition to the other ingredients of his bitter cup. But that which is principally intended by the mention of this circumstance in our collect, is a manifestation of our Lord's acquiescence in his distressful work of love. For he who, till his hour was come, defeated all the designs of his enraged enemies (see John viii. 59); he who predicted

the treason of Judas, and who by a word struck the armed band to the ground, could, if he had pleased, have withdrawn himself from them, have avoided the snare which was laid for him, or have crushed the traitor and his associates in a moment. But "he was contented to be "betrayed." He voluntarily resigned himself into the hands of those who sought his life.

The second branch of that act of love which is commemorated in our collect, is our Lord's submission to be "given up into the hands of "wicked men." For he was "delivered by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of "God, when the Jews by wicked hands crucified and slew him." If it be asked, by whom he was "given up into the hands of wicked "men?" a prophet and an Apostle shall answer the question; "The LORD laid on him the "iniquity of us all. It pleased the LORD to "bruise him. He put him to grief." Isa. liii. 6. 10. "God spared not his own Son, but "delivered him up for us all." Rom. viii. 32. Should a further testimony be required, our Lord's own words shall complete the evidence. He told Pilate that he could "have no power at "all against him, except it were given him "from above." It was God, therefore, in the character of a judge, who delivered up our Lord Jesus Christ into the hands of justice. And, oh! though the love of God be celebrated by men and angels to all eternity, their united efforts must fail of giving him the praise which is due unto his name. The devil who instigated Judas and the Jews to the horrid act of crucifying the Lord of glory, his agents, Judas, the Sanhedrim, and the Jewish rabble, Pilate and his soldiers; these were only subordinate instru-

ments who fulfilled the divine will. God took his Son, his only Son, his only Son Jesus whom he loved, and offered him up on mount Calvary.

But it may be said, If the Father and the Son are co-equal and co-eternal, if "that which "we believe of the glory of the Father, the "same we believe of the Son and of the Holy "Ghost, without any difference or inequality;"— how could God the Father send and deliver up his Son? In replying to this question we plunge deeper than before into the unfathomable abyss of divine love. For it is to be remembered that Christ's submission to death, with all its antecedent circumstances and subsequent effects, was the result of a covenant entered into between him and his Father for the redemption of lost mankind. He "was contented to be betrayed, "and given up into the hands of wicked men, "and to suffer death upon the cross," in consequence of an agreement by which he had bound himself to redeem sinners from everlasting death. There was "a covenant of peace" between the Persons in Jehovah which is spoken of in Scripture, according to which all the mediatorial acts of Immanuel have been arranged. Surely, on a survey of this subject, it behoves us to exclaim with the Apostle on another connected with it, "O the depth of the "riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of "God! how unsearchable are his judgments, "and his ways past finding out! For who hath "known the mind of the Lord, or who hath "been his counsellor? Or who hath first given "to him, and it shall be recompensed unto "him again? For of him, and through him, "and to him are all things: to whom be glory "for ever. Amen."

"Our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be "betrayed and given up into the hands of "wicked men," who were bent on his destruction, and prepared for every act of cruelty which they could devise or perpetrate. When we survey the particulars, from the act of Judas to that of the soldier who pierced his sacred side, we shall be led from one gradation of wonder and astonishment to another, till we are lost in the mystery of divine love. But "wicked men" were only the *visible* agents into whose hands he was given up, for there were other agents behind the scene. He was delivered into the hands of wicked spirits also, who were permitted to exert all their power and to exercise all their malice. "This is your hour," said the meek Sufferer to the chief priests and captains of the Temple and elders, "and the power of dark-"ness." He was surrounded and assaulted by innumerable hosts of fiends, who hated his person and had felt his power, who all combined in a furious assault on his immaculate soul. But this is not all. For he was delivered up into the hands of divine justice, to be dealt with as a criminal charged with the sin of the whole world. "It was exacted, and he was made "answerable*."

The third and concluding act of divine love specified in our collect is our Lord's voluntary submission to death, even the death of the cross. This completed the dire catastrophe. This "finished the transgression, made an end "of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and "brought in everlasting righteousness." The death which he died was attended with every

* Bishop Lowth's version of Isa. liii. 7, first clause.

circumstance of ignominy and lingering torture which could be inflicted; and it was moreover distinguished from other modes of execution by the peculiar curse which was attached to it by the divine law—a law which was framed with an express view to the death of Christ. (Comp. Deut. xxi. 23, with Gal. iii. 13.) The great Lord of the universe was lifted up between heaven and earth as unworthy of either, as too execrable to touch the one or the other. The command which, in case of crucifixion, was given for immediate burial, signified the same. The abominated object was to be removed directly out of sight. By the death of Christ the curse of the law was accomplished, the types were realised, and the prophecies fulfilled. (See Psal. xxii. 16, 17; Zech. xii. 10; John iii. 14.)

We proceed now to consider the end of those sufferings to which our Lord Jesus Christ submitted. This is noted in our collect for the purpose of securing divine regard to our prayers from the Author of all grace, and of awakening gratitude in the hearts of those who join in our supplications. It was *for* the family of God that Christ was contented to suffer death upon the cross. His sufferings were PENAL, VICARIOUS, PROPITIATORY. They were not, like the sufferings of the martyrs, a mere confirmation of his sincerity and of the truth of the doctrine which he taught. They were not, like the sufferings of the saints in general, purifying chastisements; for Christ needed no purification. But they were strictly PENAL. They were of the same kind, and inflicted on the same account, as the punishment of the damned. Sin was the meritorious cause of them. They were the *penalty* of transgression. They were, moreover, VICARIOUS.

For our Lord had no sin of his own. It was *imputed* sin, which he bore in his own body on the tree. "He died the just for the unjust, to "bring us to God." Those who deny that Christ suffered in the place of sinners, are obliged to deny the inspiration of the Apostolic epistles. But to be consistent they must abandon the Gospel also, and thereby at once avow themselves deists. For our Lord himself has asserted the same truth, on which his Apostles have more largely expatiated; for he declared himself to be "the good "Shepherd who giveth his life *for* the sheep." John x. 11. And again he repeats it, ver. 15, "I lay down my life *for* the sheep." And that his mode of expression means a proper substitution, can be doubted by no persons who are not grossly ignorant or wilfully blind*. The sufferings of Christ were also PROPITIATORY. Their object was an atonement† for sin. They were an equivalent paid to divine justice for human

* Comp. Rom. v. 6–8. "Raphelius (not. ex Xen. in "ver. 8,) has abundantly demonstrated that υπερ ημων αποθανη "signifies that he died in *our room and stead:* nor can I "find that αποθανειν υπερ τινος has ever any other significa-"tion than that of *rescuing the life of another at the expense "of our own:* and the very next verse (*i. e.* ver. 7,) shews, "independent on any other authority, how evidently it "bears that sense here, as one can hardly imagine any "one would die for a good man, unless it were to redeem "his life by giving up his own."——*Doddridge.* Comp. Philemon 13; John xi. 50; 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 6.

† "To atone, *v. n.* (from *at one,* as the etymologists "remark, *to be at one* is the same as *to be in concord.* This "derivation is much confirmed by the following passage of "*Shakspeare,* and appears to be the sense still retained in "Scotland:)"

> "He and Aufidius can no more atone
> "Than violentest contrariety."
>
> *Johnson's Dictionary.*

transgression, whereby satisfaction has been made to the injured Majesty of heaven, and the dignity of God's law maintained, as it binds both to obedience and punishment; that thereby "God may "be just and the justifier of him that believeth in "Jesus." The propitiatory nature and design Christ's sufferings are implied in all the typical sacrifices of the law, and strongly asserted in the Gospel. It is admitted that a variety of questions on this subject may be started, and difficulties be proposed, which it is not in our power to solve. But it is enough for the conscious humble mind, that THE WORD OF GOD hath propounded it as THE OBJECT OF FAITH. It is the life and soul of divine revelation: it is the line of separation between faith and infidelity. And "he "who believeth hath the witness in himself," that this doctrine is true. All genuine convictions of sin prove the divinity of a scheme so exactly adapted to afford peace to a guilty conscience and ease to a burthened heart. We are not called to explain it, but to believe it on the authority of God; and in proportion as we submit to that authority, we find increasing evidence which satisfies the soul, and enables it to rest all its hopes on this single foundation, "that Christ is "the propitiation for our sins." Reader, while others dispute the existence of the water of life, let us taste, yea, and drink abundantly of it; and its refreshing and reviving qualities will afford us that evidence which experience only can give.

The blessing which we implore is divine regard to those for whom Christ was "contented to "suffer death upon the cross," who are here spoken of under the endearing title of God's *family*. This assumption of relationship to God is justified by Scripture language. Eph. iii. 15.

The genuine members of the Catholic church, are "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," and constitute "the household of God." They are brought into this happy circle by adoption and grace through the atoning Saviour; and they publicly meet this day for the purpose of blessing their Father which is in heaven for the inestimable benefit, and of magnifying the grace of their elder brother, from whose incarnation, sufferings, and death, they derive all their present comforts and future hopes.

The regard which we implore for ourselves as the family of God, comprehends the communication of all those benefits, for the purchase of which our Lord Jesus Christ was "contented "to be betrayed, to be given up into the hands "of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the "cross." To describe them, and to pay the Author of them the tribute of praise which is due to his adorable name, will be the employment of eternity. Pardon, holiness, and heaven, are blessings of which we cannot fully comprehend the value, and for which no thanksgiving can fully compensate.

When on this day we implore these unspeakable blessings, how forcible is our plea! Can we ask in vain when, recalling Calvary to mind, we beseech "Almighty God graciously to behold "his" own "family;" and urge "the agony and "bloody sweat, the cross and passion," of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ? Can we use the language of our church, with such objects before our eyes, without earnest desire and lively faith in our hearts?

Our collect concludes with a doxology, stating the subsequent exaltation of the atoning Saviour to life everlasting and to a kingdom which hath

no end. This consideration attests the efficacy of his vicarious sufferings, and the completion of his mediatorial work. He cried with his expiring breath, "IT IS FINISHED." And the truth of his declaration is demonstrated by his resurrection, ascension, and glorification, as "the head of "his body the church."

Before we conclude, let us inquire what emotions have been excited in our souls by a recital of our collect, and by the work of this day. For surely the scene we have surveyed is calculated to move even a heart of stone.

Methinks a rising sigh escapes from the bosom of some penitent sinner, while a falling tear of love and sorrow bedews his cheek. The promise of a divine influence to attend the word of truth is fulfilled in his experience; and he is enabled to "look to him whom he hath pierced, and to "mourn for him as one mourneth for an only "son, and as one that is in bitterness for his first-"born." The rebel is vanquished by redeeming love. The heart of stone is taken away and replaced by a heart of flesh. The sigh of regret, and the tear of conscious guilt, are happy omens. They prove that the "Gospel is" still "the "power of God unto salvation." May these symptoms of "godly sorrow" ripen into a "repent-"ance unto life never to be repented of!"

But perhaps these pages may fall in the way of some persons who are wholly unmoved by the dying love of Christ. Oh! let them consider the consequences of impenitence before it be too late. Christ has died, but they reject his atonement. Pardon is procured for the contrite sinner, but they are obdurate and spurn it. Let them contemplate in the mirror which the sufferings of Immanuel present, the evil of sin, and consider

"if these things were done in the green tree, "what shall be done in the dry?" If imputed guilt was as much as the God-man could bear, what will the weight of personal transgression be, when "judgment is laid to the line, and "righteousness to the plummet, and the hail" of divine wrath "shall sweep away the refuge of "lies." Let the practical unbeliever remember that his case will be worse than if Christ had not been "contented to be betrayed, and given up "into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer "death upon the cross." For to all his other sins he adds that sin of sins, a rejection of the only and divinely provided remedy. "He that "despised Moses' law, died without mercy under "two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer "punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought "worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son "of God, hath counted the blood of the covenant "wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, "and done despite unto the Spirit of grace! For "we know him that hath said, Vengeance be-"longeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the "Lord: and again, The Lord shall judge his "people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the "hands of the living God."

THE SECOND COLLECT FOR GOOD FRIDAY.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified; receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before thee, for all estates of men in thy holy church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

OUR church has appointed three appropriate collects to be used on Good Friday. In the first of these every congregation implores mercy for itself. In the second, the whole visible church is recommended to the divine favour. And in the third, we solicit an extension of divine compassion to all the rest of the world who are without the pale of Christianity.

In the second collect, which is a prayer for "Christ's church militant here on earth," we obey both the command of God and the dictate of natural affection. It is the command of God that his disciples "love one another with a pure "heart fervently;" and the certain effect of Christian charity is mutual supplication. For we cannot love another without being desirous, so far as it lies in our power, of promoting his happiness; and in many instances we have no means of contributing to the welfare of our brethren any otherwise than by praying for them. They are out of the reach of any other act of

that ardent benevolence which our hearts feel towards them. But the members of the Christian church have mutual duties to perform, which arise not only from the obedience which they owe to God, but also from the relation in which they stand to each other. For the church is the body of Christ, and every believer is a member of that body. He is therefore closely connected with all those who are partakers of like precious faith. And with the general good his own welfare is intimately and essentially connected.

As we obey an Apostolic edict (1 Tim. ii. 1) while we are using this collect of our church, we may rest assured that our prayer will be heard and answered; for "if we ask any thing according "ing to the will of God, he heareth us." Had Esther any need to hesitate in preferring her request, or in expecting a favourable issue to her suit, after the royal command and promise which she had received? (Esther v. 3.) And have we not also commands and promises to sanction and encourage our faith while we pray "for all estates "of men in God's holy church?" Such prayers as this have been constantly used in the church from its commencement, as appears by the writings of antiquity which are still extant.

In the preface of our collect we remind him to whom it is addressed, and whose omnipotence and eternity are the foundations on which his church is built, that he hath a church here on earth, and that it is wholly dependent on him for its being and its welfare. For as the body without breath is a mere lump of lifeless and putrifying matter, so also would the church be without divine inspiration. The church is the body of Christ, and the individuals of whom the church

is composed are members of that body. And as all the members of the natural body are governed and influenced by one soul; so is "the whole "body of the church animated by God's good "Spirit, which is, as it were, the soul of the "church, by which Jesus our head quickens the "whole body and orders every part*." The members of the church, with respect to local situation, are widely scattered. Seas and mountains, and long successions of revolving years, divide them corporeally from each other. Diversified colours, customs and manners, form other external distinctions among them. But they are all "one in Christ Jesus" their head. "There "is one body, and one Spirit, even as they are "all called in one hope of their calling. One "Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and "Father of all, who is above all, and through all, "and in them all." Let a converted Englishman and a converted African or Indian be brought together, and be enabled by some common language to communicate their sentiments; and the Spirit by which "the whole body of the church "is governed and sanctified" will shew itself in emotions and expressions of reciprocal attachment which none but Christians feel.

The dependence of the church on God, and its union with him through the influence of his Spirit communicated to every genuine Christian, are introduced as arguments whereby our application to the throne of grace is enforced. By the divine Spirit the church is "*governed*." All its outward circumstances are regulated by his watchful providence. And all its real members

* Comber.

are under the control and direction of his word and grace. By him also it is "sanctified." The efficacy of all ordinances is derived from him; without whose almighty power sin cannot be subdued nor holiness be attained. In him the church "lives, and moves, and has its being."

In the consideration addressed to the ear of divine mercy, that "by his Spirit the whole "body of the church is governed and sanctified," several cogent pleas for success in our prayer are comprehended. The relation in which the church stands to God, as constituting the body of Christ and animated by his Spirit—the absolute need of his grace to its being and welfare—and the promises which he hath made of his favour and presence—these are motives to a "reception of "our supplications and prayers offered before "him," which cannot be urged in vain.

On these grounds we proceed to implore a favourable audience. "Prayers and supplica-"tions" we have before presented; and to these we now add a new request "for all estates of "men in God's holy church; that every mem-"ber of the same, in his vocation and ministry, "may truly and godly serve him, through our "Lord Jesus Christ."

Herein we pray, as we are required, "for kings "and all who are in authority," for the ministers of God's holy word and sacraments; and for all other members of the Christian church. All these have a claim on our intercessions; for "the eye "cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of "thee: nor again, the head to the feet, I have "no need of you." And much less can the inferior members say to the superior ones, ye are needless. The Christian church is one body, in

which "there should be no schism, but all the "members should have the same care" and concern "one for another."

Every member of the church has a vocation and ministry in which he is to serve God. As rulers or subjects, ministers or people, as husbands or wives, as masters or servants, as parents or children, our duties are reciprocal, manifold, and important. They are so extensive, and their obligation on our consciences is of so solemn a nature, that every member of the church who has contemplated them in the light of God's word and Spirit, must assuredly rejoice in having the prayers of his brethren offered on his behalf, and be fervent in supplication for others. But alas! there are many persons who are insensible that they have a vocation in which they are to serve God. They live to themselves, to the world, and the devil, and prostitute that vocation which they have received for the glory of God to the dishonour of his holy name. When we consider the present state of the visible church, the lives of those who call themselves Christians in every rank and station, surely we have need to cry mightily to God, that the influence of his Spirit "by which the whole body of the" real church "of Christ is governed and sanctified" may be extended to our brethren, who, while they profess themselves Christians, discover nothing of the spirit of Christianity, and have only a name to live, but are in fact dead in trespasses and sins. For while every member of the church is bound to serve God in his vocation and ministry, making the glory of God his constant and supreme object, aim and end, devoting his time and talents to the service of God in that sphere

in which he is called to move, is it not demonstrable that many "seek their own, not the things "which are Jesus Christ's?"—is it not plain that the lives of great numbers among us have no relation to God,—nay, that they are one continued act of rebellion against him? If this be true, never was the use of our collect more seasonable than at present. May we be enabled to use it with fervent importunity! and may God hear and answer us for his mercy's sake, "through "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

THE THIRD COLLECT FOR GOOD FRIDAY.

O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

If it be our duty to pray for our fellow-sinners who are without the pale of the church, when can we do it with so great propriety, or with so lively an expectation of success, as on this day, when the ground of all our own hopes, and of those which we entertain for others, is so clearly exhibited to our view, and so forcibly pressed on our attention? With a crucified Saviour before our eyes as "the propitiation for our "sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins "of the whole world," O what motives and encouragements to fervent intercession arise! That it is both our duty and privilege to pray for the conversion of all those who have been redeemed with the precious blood of our common Saviour, is a position which will not be disputed.

And that all who have themselves tasted that the Lord is gracious must find pleasure in this employment, is equally clear. For every one who has participated in the benefits of redemption, must be anxious for a diffusion of the Saviour's glory, and of the benefits of his cross and passion. If any persons therefore are uninterested in this missionary prayer, they have reason to fear lest they themselves be found in a state of greater guilt and danger than those for whom this prayer is offered. For, under all the advantages which the Gospel proposes, it is evident that their hearts remain destitute of that genuine charity which is the constant attendant of a living faith;—destitute of love both to God and man.

While we contemplate the state of the world which still "lieth in the wicked one," under the conduct of our church in the collect before us, we shall find personal advantage in the survey. For oh! what motives to gratitude will it exhibit! Why hath the Gospel been sent to us rather than to others? Why do we enjoy its unspeakable blessings, while so many of our fellow creatures still lie in darkness and the shadow of death? To these questions no other answer can be given than that we owe all our advantages to the grace of God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

The preface of our collect recites the general good-will of that "merciful God, who hath made "all men, and hateth nothing that he hath "made, nor would the death of a sinner, but "rather that he should be converted and live." This view of divine compassion is founded on express declarations of Holy Scripture, which were referred to while we descanted on the

collect for Ash Wednesday. Those considerations which are there introduced for the purpose of affording to ourselves encouragement in praying for personal salvation, are here made use of as a ground of encouragement while we offer our petitions for the conversion and salvation of the whole world. All mankind were originally made of one blood; all are by nature equally destitute of merit or meetness with respect to the blessings of redemption; all are equally capable of salvation, if God vouchsafe to send it to them; and all are equally dependent on the mercy of God, both for the outward means and the inward enjoyment of it.

Having reminded him to whom we address our intercession, of his merciful intentions and declarations, not with a view to his information but to the confirmation of our own faith, and the animation of our own desires, we proceed to divide the unchristian world into four parts comprehensive of the whole. We begin, as we are in duty bound, with the descendants of God's ancient church, the Jews. These are still a great multitude, whose numbers from their wide dispersion it is impossible to calculate. Scarcely is there a civilized nation with which they are not mingled. Though by the just judgment of God for their offences, and especially the act of deicide by which they filled up the measure of their iniquities, they have been scattered over the face of the globe; yet have they been miraculously kept distinct from the various nations among whom they have long resided. By a long abode in various countries their skin has assumed the hue peculiar to the inhabitants of those climates in which they

sojourn*; yet they remain a distinct people, and are easily recognised as descendants of the once renowned favourites of heaven. This stupendous miracle is a standing attestation to the truth of Scripture which infidelity can never invalidate. And while they cry aloud to Christians, warning them of the danger of apostacy, Rom. xi. 21; their continuance as a distinct people confirms the promises of God respecting their own restoration to his favour by their future conversion to the faith of Christ.

For the conversion of the Jews we shall assuredly feel ourselves bound to pray with the greatest fervency, if we consider that they have been the channel through which all our blessings have flowed. They were the appointed ark in which the true religion was preserved when all the world besides were drowned in the grossest idolatry. From them, at length, "as concerning "the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God "blessed for ever"—the divine Redeemer of a lost world. Those who preached the blessed Gospel throughout the world, at the risk of their lives and with the forfeiture of all their earthly comforts, were Jews;—and among the rest that laborious man who, it is supposed, first planted the tree of life on our own shores, St. Paul, was a descendant of Abraham. To these considerations we may add the personal interest which we Gentiles have in their restoration; "for if the rejec- "tion of them were the reconciliation of" so

* "The English Jew is white, the Portuguese swarthy, "the American olive, and the Arabian copper; in short, "there appear to be as many species of Jews, as there are "countries in which they reside."—*Clarkson on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, p. 143.

great a part of "the world" by the diffusion of the Gospel which it occasioned, "what will the "reception of them be but life from the dead," since it will naturally conduce to the conversion of all nations among whom they have been dispersed? Surely on these and other accounts which might be mentioned, we are bound, both by gratitude and self-interest, to pray for the gathering of Israel into the Christian fold. And, blessed be God! our hopes concerning it and our prayers for its accomplishment derive the fullest sanction and encouragement from Scripture*.

Having thus presented to the compassionate notice of our Lord our elder brethren the Jews, we proceed to implore his mercy on the "Turks." Under this term we comprehend all the deluded followers of Mohammed, because the Turkish empire is the principal seat and fountain of their abominable superstition. This imposture arose in the beginning of the seventh century, and was permitted by divine Providence to take place as a punishment on the eastern church for its apostacy from the faith of Christ, especially in the doctrine of our Lord's divinity. It has spread itself over a part of Europe, a great part of Asia, and a part of Africa.—In praying for the conversion of the Turks the symptoms of the times afford us great encouragement. For the unwieldy pile of the Turkish empire, feebly connected in its several component parts, and daily weakened by its own weight, totters to destruction†.

"By infidels," who form the third object of

* See particularly Isaiah xxvii. 12, 13; Ezek. xi. 17–21; xx. 34–44; xxxiv. 13, 14; xxxvi. 24–28; xxxvii. 21–28 Amos ix. 14, 15; Obad. 17; Micah vii. 14, 15; Zech. xiv 10, 11; Hosea i. 10, 11; Rom. xi.

† See Eaton's Sketches of the Turkish Empire.

our pious concern, we mean heathens of all descriptions. Of these the number is vast indeed. For nineteen out of thirty parts of the world are still involved in the grossest darkness. Dark however and widely extended as is the night of ignorance that still overshadows the world, the promises of Scripture encourage us to pray; for the kingdoms of the world are to become the "kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ."

Under the name of "heretics" we include all those who, while they call themselves Christians, deny the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Of these objects of our pity great multitudes are to be found in every Christian country; and it is to be feared that their number is rapidly increasing. These are, in some respects, exposed to greater danger than either Jews, Turks, or infidels. For their condemnation will be heavier, since light has shone around them, and they have preferred darkness before it because their deeds are evil.

But what do we implore on behalf of these several classes of our perishing fellow-sinners? One thing is needful for them and ourselves, *viz.* the saving knowledge of a crucified Redeemer, communicated through the Gospel, by the influence of the Holy Ghost, to the heart.

We pray, therefore, that God would "take "from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, "and contempt of his word." Many of those unhappy persons for whom we pray have never heard the Gospel—have never had an opportunity of hearing it. For them we pray that God would remove their ignorance by sending his word among them, and by accompanying the mission with the effectual working of his power. Others among the objects of our commiseration

have heard the truth and hardened their hearts against it, yea, have treated it with contempt. Yet even these are not out of the reach of divine mercy; and we therefore pray for them, that God would "take from them all hardness of "heart and contempt of his word."

We proceed to entreat that those who are now aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, may, by the influence of divine grace, be fetched home to the flock of Christ. The character of the good Shepherd affords ground for hope. He laid down his life for the sheep. O then let us pray fervently that "all Jews, Turks, infi-"dels, and heretics, may be saved among the "number of the true Israelites, and be made "one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ "our Lord!" We know that none but "true "Israelites" can be saved. Without conversion there is no salvation. Out of the catholic church, the general congregation of the faithful, there is no hope. It is only in the one fold, under the one Shepherd, that there is any security from the devouring lion. It is a spurious charity which hopes that "every man shall be "saved by the law or sect which he professeth, "so that he be diligent to frame his life accord-"ing to that law, and the light of nature. For "Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the "name of Jesus Christ whereby men must "be saved*." Instead therefore of indulging groundless and lazy hopes, let us earnestly address the mercy-seat with our fervent intercessions, and with bowels of compassion yearning over a lost world. Christ "liveth" to plead the

* Article xviii.

merits of his sacrifice, and " reigneth " to subdue all his enemies.

Though this collect of our church is appointed for public use only on one day in the year, it is suited to our daily private use. It may be considered as a paraphrase on that petition in the Lord's prayer, " Thy kingdom come."

If it be our duty to pray for the conversion of Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, it is evidently also our duty to labour for its accomplishment. God has graciously stirred up of late a considerable degree of zeal on this subject in the hearts of Christian professors. He has awakened in them a spirit of contrition for past indifference to the glory of his name and the salvation of sinners. In consequence thereof new societies have been formed among different denominations of Christians for missionary purposes. Among the rest one new society has arisen within our own church, and one that had long existed has assumed a new and more interesting character. These solicit the aid of all her members. Oh! let us prove that the prayers which we offer on this day to the heart-searching God with our lips, are the genuine effusion of our hearts, by contributing with all our might to the furtherance of those plans which are laid for the most important purpose of diffusing the knowledge of a crucified Saviour. Surely our prayers must be hypocritical, and our professed attachment to the liturgy merely nominal, if we hesitate to concur, according to our ability, in the support of missionary efforts.

" Ought we not to have compassion on our " brethren, even as God hath compassion on us? " —By the songs of angels, who proclaimed " peace and love at our Redeemer's birth; by

" that Gospel which is glad tidings to all people;
" by the solemn injunction of him who said, Ye
" are my friends if ye keep my commandments;
" by the glorious Pentecost, when every language
" praised God; by the multitudes who have
" washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb;
" by the acts of the Apostles, and the sufferings
" of the martyrs; by the expiring pangs of Jesus,
" and by those sins of our own, which bruised
" him, and put him to grief; by their remission,
" if we have indeed tasted that the Lord is
" gracious; by the fearful end of that servant,
" who buried his Lord's talent; by the curses
" and execrations which rest upon the Christian
" name; by the rivers of heathen blood which
" Christians have shed, and which call for expia-
" tion at our hands; if there be any consolation
" in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellow-
" ship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, I
" entreat you, have mercy on the heathens, and
" so fulfil the joy of your Lord*."

* Horne's Letters on Missions, p. 142. This work is earnestly recommended to the reader's attention, together with the sermons and reports of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, and the other delightful details of the Missionary Register.

THE COLLECT FOR EASTER EVEN*.

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; so, by continually mortifying our corrupt affections, we may be buried with him, and that through the grave and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection, for his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIS evangelical, spiritual, and comprehensive form of prayer is founded on those facts which, at the present season of the year, particularly claim our attention, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it teaches us to implore for ourselves those blessed effects which are derivable from a dead, a buried, and a risen Saviour.

* For a particular account of the *great sabbath* (as the day between Good Friday and Easter day was commonly called by the ancients) see Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, book xxi. chap. i. sect. 32. After describing the strict fast which was thereon observed, and the manner in which the time was spent, he adds, "Of the "vigil between the great Sabbath and Easter day frequent "mention is made in the ancient writers, Chrysostom, "Epiphanius, Palladius, Gregory Nyssen, and many others. "Particularly Lactantius and St. Jerom tell us, they "observed it on a double account. This is the night, says "Lactantius, which we observe with a pernoctation or "watching all night for the advent of our KING and GOD;

Our collect consists of—a preface which recites a fact that is supposed—and of a petition founded on that fact.

The fact which is here supposed is a very important one, that "we are baptized into the "death of the Son of God our Saviour Jesus "Christ." St. Paul reminds the Romans of the same, (chap. vi. 3–5) "Know ye not that so "many of us as *are** baptized into Jesus Christ, "*are* baptized into his death? Therefore we are "buried with him by baptism into death, that "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by "the glory of the Father, even so we also should "walk in newness of life. For if we have been "planted together in the likeness of his death, "we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrec-"tion." Our baptismal professions and obligations bind us to a mortification of the body of sin, and to newness of life.

By baptism we are entitled to a participation of all the privileges purchased by the death of Christ; and if we have received not only the outward and visible sign, but also the inward and spiritual grace, we are actual partakers of them. For then "we are one with Christ." His acts are by imputation ours; and the effects of those acts are, of consequence, ours also by right of

"of which night there is a two-fold reason to be given, "because on this night our Lord was raised to life again "after his passion; and in the same he is expected to "return to receive the kingdom of this world, that is, to "come to judgment. St. Jerom says, it was a tradition "among the Jews, that Christ would come at midnight, as "he did upon the Egyptians at the time of the *Passover*, "and thence he thinks the Apostolical custom came, not "to dismiss the people on the paschal vigil before mid-"night, expecting the coming of Christ."

* Marg. reading.

union with him. In him we died, whereby the curse of the law is cancelled, the righteousness of the law fulfilled, and grace secured.—Reader, we have been baptized into a profession of Christianity; but have we been also, by union with Christ through faith in his name, brought into a participation of his saving benefits? Do we understand the meaning and obligation of this solemn ordinance? Do we thankfully "remember that baptism doth represent unto us our "profession, which is to follow the example of "our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto "him—that as he died and rose again for us, so "should we who are baptized die from sin, and "rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and "daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of "living*?"

By baptism, then, we were brought under an obligation to comply with the design of Christ's death, which was "to redeem us from all iniquity, "and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, "zealous of good works." Christ died unto sin, that we, mortifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, might live unto God. Are we then crucified with Christ? Professionally, as baptized persons, we are: but are we so in fact? Of what advantage will the commemoration of our Lord's death be to us, unless we become acquainted with the efficacious and actual influence thereof, and are really conformed to him therein? If we continue in sin, suffering it to reign in our mortal bodies, and obey it in the lusts thereof, we contradict our Christian profession, violate our

* Exhortation to godfathers and godmothers in the baptismal service.

Christian obligations, and renounce all the benefits of a sacramental conformity to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The prayer which we found on a consideration of our sacramental death with Christ in baptism, consists of two petitions. We implore a conformity to Christ—in his burial,—and in his resurrection.

The burial of our Lord Jesus Christ was necessary for the purpose of demonstrating the reality of his death. With a view to this the malice of the Jews was providentially overruled. Their anxiety to detect a supposed imposture, by rolling a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, by adding to its security the seal of office and a guard of soldiers, effectually proved that the victim of their fury was indeed dead. In like manner the truth of our conformity to Christ in a death unto sin must be demonstrated by the burial of all our lusts.

That which is buried is put away in disgust. A dead body has lost all its charms, and if retained would corrupt and be offensive. By the awful change which death produces we are constrained to remove from our embrace and sight the dearest objects of our love. Gen. xxviii. 4. Thus must sin be dealt with. And however dear it may have been to us in the days of our guilty association with it, so soon as our old man is crucified with Christ, we become anxious to be separated for ever from it. Such was the solicitude of St. Paul, which is elegantly expressed by an allusion to the circumstance we have described, (Rom. vii. 24,) "O wretched man "that I am! who shall deliver me from the "body of this death?" He felt like a criminal

chained to a dead and putrid carcase, and longed for deliverance from it. His sinful nature was loathsome to him, and he anxiously wished for a separation from so hateful a companion. Reader, do your sensibilities correspond with his? Surely if you are dead with Christ, you must be earnestly solicitous for a complete deliverance from sin.

The body that is buried is removed out of sight. We have nothing more to do with it. All our delight in it and satisfaction from it are at an end: all concern about its gratification and preservation ceases for ever. Thus should the believer feel towards the body of sin. He is to "reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin." He is to consider the connexion between him and sin to be entirely dissolved. Sin is no more to have dominion over him, for he is not under the law but under grace.

The body of Christ lost in the grave all its earthly properties. It became on its resurrection spiritual and immortal. It needed no longer the same kind of aliment by which it was before sustained. It was no longer governed by the same laws, nor subject to the same restraints. It felt no longer the same wants, nor was liable to the same injuries and sufferings as before. And in like manner those who are buried with Christ leave in the grave of nature their earthly and carnal properties. They become new creatures. Old things pass away, and all things become new. The identity of Christ's body before and after his resurrection is to be maintained. It was essentially the same body, and its members were the same. So also the new-born soul is not a new creation, in the strict sense

of the word, as it means a production from nothing. But it is newly formed*. It is capable of new exertions, lives on different food, and for ends and purposes opposite to those of its natural state. Though it possesses the same faculties, yet these are endued with new qualifications, and are employed on objects totally distinct from its former pursuits.

It may be asked, how is this mystic burial† with Christ effected? The agency which produces it, is divine; but the regenerate soul is, by divine agency, rendered active in the work. By a continual mortification of corrupt affections, by a watchful opposition to every desire of the flesh, the body of sin is gradually destroyed, and at length finally separated from the redeemed spirit. To this our sacramental engagements bind us; and it becomes us seriously to inquire, whether we are mindful of them. For unless we are conformed to Christ in his burial, we have no reason to expect conformity to him in his resurrection.

When Christ expired, the heavens were clad in deep mourning, and the bosom of the earth beneath was rent asunder. But these tokens of distress were preparatory to the brightness of returning day, and enhanced the gladness of that morning when Christ arose. In like manner those who are mortifying their corrupt affections wear the mourning garb of penitence, but that

* Κτισις evidently means formation and not creation as it is used in Heb. ix. 11. And the verb Κτιζω signifies to produce from pre-existent matter in 1 Cor. xi. 9. Comp. Eph. ii. 5.

† Whether baptism be performed by aspersion or immersion, the allusion to sepulture will be maintained. For when a dead body is interred, dust is first *sprinkled* over it, and then it is covered with earth.

will soon be exchanged for the garments of salvation. God will "appoint unto them that mourn "in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of "praise for the spirit of heaviness." Isa. lxi. 3. The promises of God warrant this expectation, and therefore the members of our church are instructed to implore a conformity to Christ in his resurrection.

There is a two-fold conformity to Christ in his death and resurrection, which his redeemed experience by virtue of their union with him. First, a spiritual conformity: for, through faith in his name, they "die to sin and rise again "unto righteousness." "Their old man is cru- "cified with Christ, that the body of sin might "be destroyed, that thenceforth they should not "serve sin." Of this spiritual conformity to the death and resurrection of Christ we have already spoken.

But, secondly, believers are outwardly conformed to their adorable head in his death and resurrection. For as Christ died, so must they also in a natural sense. As his body lay in the grave, so likewise must their bodies. And as his body arose from the grave, so also shall theirs. For this literal resurrection we are taught to pray in the conclusion of our collect, where we beseech God "that, through the grave and gate "of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrec- "tion, for his merits, who died, and was buried, "and rose again for us, his Son Jesus Christ our "Lord."

"It is appointed unto men once to die." "Dust "thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," was part of the original sentence pronounced on Adam as the representative of all his posterity.

This sentence has been fulfilling from the time of the fall to the present hour, and will continue to be fulfilled to the consummation of all things. Believers as well as others must experience a dissolution of nature, a separation of soul and body. But their death is no part of the punishment due to sin, for that has been borne by Christ in their stead; but it is the abolition of sin, and a passage to life eternal.

It is certain that the separation of the believer's body and soul is not death, in the strict and penal sense of the word, as a part of the curse. For both our Lord and his Apostles have assured us, that believers do not, and cannot die. The cause of death being taken away with respect to them, the effect ceases. The crime being pardoned, the punishment due to it cannot justly be inflicted. Christ their surety having died for them, they are redeemed from death. This is plain from many declarations and promises of Scripture:—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he "that heareth my word, and believeth on him "that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall "not come into condemnation, but *is* passed "from death unto life." John. v. 24. "Verily, "verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, "he shall never see death." John viii. 51. "Jesus "said unto her, I am the resurrection and the "life: he that believeth on me, though he were "dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth "and believeth on me, shall never die." John xi. 25, 26. "The wages of sin is death: but the "gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ "our Lord." Rom. vi. 23. "The grace which "was given us in Christ before the world began, "is now made manifest by the appearing of our "Saviour Jesus Christ, who *hath abolished*

" death, and hath brought life and immortality " to light by the Gospel." 2 Tim. i. 10. " We " know that we *are* passed from death unto life." 1 John iii. 14.

The only way by which these comfortable declarations can be reconciled with the fact with which we are daily conversant, *viz.* the dissolution of believers, is a distinction to be made between death in its primary and proper sense, as threatened to Adam and his posterity on account of sin, and that change which the redeemed experience. The earthly house of the believer's tabernacle must be dissolved, but the believer can never die. That dissolution is not a branch of the curse, but a part of the blessing which redemption secures. The believer begins to live so soon as he believes; but it is a dying life which he leads while united to a sinful body. The dissolution of the body is an advanced stage of that eternal life which, commencing at regeneration, can know no interruption nor end*.

From these premises it will appear that the grave is called in our collect " the *gate* of death" with strict propriety. With repect to believers it has changed its nature. The bodies of unregenerate unjustified persons are confined in the grave as in a dungeon against the judgment-day. But to the members of Christ the grave is a privileged and sanctified dormitory; nay, it is the gate of life. The Christian believer may joyfully say, " Though I pass through the valley of " the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;" ' for ' there is no evil in death, since all that was penal ' in it was exacted from Christ my surety.'

* See the extract from the homily against the fear of death, quoted in the following Essay.

It is further to be considered, that as the union between the body of Christ and his divine nature was not dissolved, while his body lay in the grave; so neither is the union between Christ as the head, and the body as a constituent part of a believer in him, dissolved, when the believer's body is consigned breathless to the tomb. The natural union between Christ's body and soul ceased for a time; but the hypostatic union between his godhead and both the constituent parts of his manhood remained indissoluble. And in like manner Christ and his members are united as to their whole man, and can never be separated.

The body of our Lord rested in hope. The grave could detain its illustrious prisoner no longer than the appointed moment. By virtue of the covenant of redemption our Redeemer, predicting his own resurrection, could say, "I "have set the Lord always before me: because "he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory "rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither "wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corrup-"tion. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: In "thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right "hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psal. xvi. 8–11. The believer also sleeps in Jesus with an assurance of awaking again. "The "righteous hath hope in his death." Prov. xiv. 32. In a strain of exultation similar to that which his Lord has used, the believer is enabled to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, "where is thy victory? The sting of death is "sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but "thanks be to God who giveth us the victory

"through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. "The grave and gate of death" is nothing else but a passage "to a joyful resurrec-"tion." For Christ rose as the first fruits of them that sleep, and by his resurrection hath afforded an earnest, pledge, and assurance of ours. The bodies of believers, being the members of Christ, can no more be detained by death than Christ himself was. He may be considered as addressing his saints in the consolatory words with which Jacob was cheered on his descent into Egypt; "Fear not to go down into the "grave; for I will go down with thee, and I "will safely bring thee up again."

Our ground for confidence in praying, "that "through the grave and gate of death we may "pass to our joyful resurrection," is solid and immoveable. For we plead "his merits, who "died, was buried, and rose again for us." By his death, burial, resurrection, and glorification, as the federal head and representative of his redeemed, their justification, sanctification, resurrection, and glorification are secured. For they are one with him, and he is one with them. He is the head, and they the members of his mystical body.

The use of our collect supposes that "we are "risen with Christ" through the reviving power of his Spirit, "and our affections set on things "above." Let us closely examine the correspondence that exists between our affections and our prayers, and determine, according to the dictates of conscience, whether the charitable hope of our church concerning us be justified by our experience. And if it should appear that we are destitute of internal evidence that we are interested in the glorious Saviour of sinners, O

let us lose no time in seeking for union with him by faith, that we may be participants in his death, burial, and resurrection. If, on the contrary, we have the witness in ourselves that Christ hath died, been buried, and is risen again, let us study our inestimable privileges consequent thereon. Every fresh review of them will increase our holiness and happiness.

If to be a Christian is to be dead, buried, and risen with Christ, O how few real Christians are to be found! How few know any thing of "the power of Christ's resurrection, the fellow-"ship of his sufferings, and a conformity to his "death!" Multitudes, it is to be feared, who are called, and who call themselves Christians, have only "a name to live," while in fact they are "dead;" not "dead to sin," but "dead in "trespasses and sins." "Awake, thou that "sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ "shall give thee light."

THE COLLECT FOR EASTER DAY.

Almighty God, who through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; we beseech thee, that as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

THE Christian church, from its earliest age*, hath set apart a day for the commemoration of our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and has paid a peculiar respect and honour to it. "Gregory "Nazianzen, after his manner, styles Easter-day "the queen of days, and the festival of festivals, "which excels all others not only human but "even those which are instituted to the honour "of Christ, as far as the sun goes beyond the "other stars. It was a day of extraordinary "rejoicing upon the account of our Lord's resur-"rection; being, as Chrysostom styles it, the "desirable festival of our salvation, the day of "our Lord's resurrection, the foundation of our "peace, the occasion of our reconciliation, the "end of our contentions and enmity with God,

* There was an amicable dispute about the time of keeping Easter between Polycarp, a disciple of St. John, and Anicetus, Bishop of Rome.

" the destruction of death, and our victory over " the devil. Hence in some ancient writers it " is distinguished from all other Lord's days in " the year by the peculiar name of *Dominica* " *gaudii*, the Lord's day of joy*."

This glorious event which is to-day commemorated in the Christian church, is so well known in all its particulars that a recital of them is needless. The circumstances of our adored Saviour's triumph over sin and death and hell are detailed in the course of our service, and therefore instead of repeating them we shall employ our time to a greater advantage by endeavouring to improve the history.

Our collect shews us the use which we are to make of it. The resurrection of Christ is not only a fact to be believed, but it is also, in its effects, a truth to be experienced. An historical assent to the fact, without a perception of its power in our own hearts, will be of no avail to salvation. We must rise with Christ from the grave of natural corruption; and, being " risen with Christ," must " seek those things

* Bingham's Antiquities, book xx. chap. 5. sect. 5 :— " In the primitive times the Christians of all churches on " this day used this morning salutation, *Christ is risen*; to " which those who were saluted answered, *Christ is risen* " *indeed*, or else thus, *and hath appeared unto Simon*, a cus- " tom still retained in the Greek church. And our church, " supposing us as eager of the joyful news as they were, is " loth to withhold from us long the pleasure of expressing " it; and therefore, as soon as the absolution is pronounced, " and we are thereby rendered fit for rejoicing, she begins " her office of praise with anthems proper to the day, en- " couraging her members to call upon one another to *keep* " *the feast; for that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us,* " *and is also risen from the dead, and become the first fruits* " *of them that slept*," &c.——*Wheatly*, page 211, Oxford edit.

"which are above, where Christ sitteth at the "right hand of God. We must set our affec-"tions on things above, and not on things "beneath, being dead, and having our life hid "with Christ in God."

Our collect consists of two parts, an introduction and a prayer. In the preface the blessed consequences of Christ's resurrection are recited, and in the prayer we implore for ourselves an experimental acquaintance with its saving effects.

The preface is an act of adoration addressed to "the Lord God Omnipotent" as "the Father "of our Lord Jesus Christ." That exertion of "power which God wrought in Christ when he "raised him from the dead," fully justifies the epithet by which we glorify his name. For to "overcome death and open unto us the gate of "everlasting life," by the resurrection of his "only begotten Son Jesus Christ," was an act of "almighty" power, and encourages us in the petition which we offer for that "special "grace" whereby alone the desires which it hath put within us can be brought to good effect.

When our collect asserts that "death" is "overcome," it alludes to the triumphal language of St. Paul, (1 Cor. xv. 54,) which the Apostle has cited from the evangelical prophet (Isa. xxv. 8), "Death is swallowed up in vic-"tory*." This victory indeed has its several

* "Metaphora est, desumpta a mari, palude, voragine "profundâ, igne, animantibus voracibus, quorum est injecta "aut hausta eum in modum absumere, ut plane evanescant "et dispareant."—"Est præterea in hoc dicto prophetæ "Οξυμωρον, quod obiter illud inspicientes non observant. "Cum enim *mortis* ipsius proprie attributum censeatur "homines *involvere* et *absorbere*: propheta emphaticè simul

gradations, and will not be complete in its effects till "the resurrection of the just;" when, with respect to "the general assembly of the church "of the first-born whose names are written in "heaven," death shall be abolished with all its preliminaries and consequences as though it had never been known. For then "God shall wipe "away all tears from their eyes: and there "shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor "crying, neither shall there be any more pain: "for the former things will be passed away." Rev. xxi. 4. Then indeed, when "this cor-"ruptible shall have put on incorruption, and "this mortal shall have put on immortality, "shall be brought to pass the saying that is "written, death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. xv. 54. In the mean time, however, our Redeemer having triumphed in his own person as the head of his church, and the blessings purchased by his cross being secured by virtue of his resurrection from the dead, our church is justified in asserting that "God *hath* "overcome death through his only begotten "Son Jesus Christ." And believers are justified in exclaiming, with the triumphant tone of the Apostle, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, "where is thy victory? The sting of death is "sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but "thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory "through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 55–57.

It may be asked, on whose account and for whose benefit is death overcome? Has the vic-

"et eleganter *mortis* abolitionem et destructionem exposi-"turus, *mortem* ipsam, quam Mythologi Græci sub imagine "*Stygiæ paludis* et *Acherontis* exhibent, docet involutum et "absorptum iri."—*Vitringa in Jesaiam.*

tory which has been obtained a relation to all mankind, so that all mankind will necessarily be benefited by it?—By no means. It is obtained for the benefit of those only who, under the influence of divine grace, are induced to take a holy advantage of it. None but believers in Christ will participate in it. The rest of the world will indeed be raised from the grave by the power of God, but they will rise to feel the bitter fruits of sin in the second death. Their resurrection will not be the effect of Christ's mediation, but an act of divine justice, and a step preparatory to eternal perdition of body and soul. Their death is a part, and but a part, of the penalty of the broken law.

A further inquiry may be raised to the following effect. If "God, through his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hath overcome death" for the benefit of all the faithful, why do the faithful die as well as others? Why are they not translated without seeing death, to the mansions of immortality and glory provided for them? How doth it comport with the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God to inflict the penalty of his law both on the surety and on the original debtor?

If no information were given us on this subject, it ought to satisfy our minds that it seemeth good in the sight of God that his people should die, and that the Judge of all the earth must do right. But sufficient light is shed on the subject by the Scriptures for the purpose of shewing us, that this appointment tends both to the promotion of God's glory and of his people's happiness. Two instances have occurred in the history of the church of a translation to glory without death. These afford irrefragable evi-

dence that the death of believers is not necessary as any part of the penalty due to divine justice for sin, and that it is not therefore to be considered as of a penal nature and judicially inflicted as a vindictive punishment. To these two instances a multitude of others will be added at the coming of Christ. For those who are then found alive will be changed without death so as to be qualified for heavenly happiness, and shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. If death were necessary as a part of the atonement in one case, it would be so in all.

We are moreover informed that corporeal death is highly beneficial to the faithful. "To "die is gain," says a competent judge of the matter. "I am in a strait betwixt two," says the same inspired writer, "having a desire to "depart and to be with Christ which is far "better." Phil. i. 21. 23. "We are willing "rather to be absent from the body, and to "be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. v. 8. "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver "me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24. Now how can an event, from which nature must be abhorrent, be so desirable, but on account of high advantages to be derived from it? The chief of these is the destruction of sin which is the cause of all other evils, and which the Scripture considers as chiefly resident in the body. Rom. vi. 6. 12; and vii. 23, 24. For though the rational soul only can be guilty of sin, temptations to the commission of it chiefly enter through the senses of the body; and hence the principle of corruption is called "flesh." The will of a regenerate man is turned to God, anxiously aims at a perfect

conformity to his image, and seeks his glory. Nevertheless through "the law of sin that is in "his members he doth not the things that he "would." With a view to the destruction of sin it is appointed unto believers once to die; for though death is not absolutely necessary for this purpose, as the cases of Enoch and Elijah prove, yet God has chosen it as the most eligible method. "Our earthly house of this taber-"nacle," being defiled with the leprosy of sin, must be "dissolved."

That the destruction of sin in the faithful by the dissolution of their bodies is calculated most highly to promote the glory of Christ, and is not repugnant to divine justice, appears from the divine appointment. If all the faithful were to be translated to glory as Enoch and Elijah were, the triumphs of divine grace over sin would be greatly abridged, and the doctrine of the resurrection expunged from the Christian creed. The condemnation of sin in the flesh illustrates to the uttermost the divine wisdom, power, holiness, and justice, and at the same time promotes the final happiness of the redeemed. Were conversion and glorification contemporaneous, how little should we know by experience of the evil of sin, of the riches of grace, of the value of Christ, of the power of God! But the knowledge of these things which we acquire by the painful process through which we pass, will sweeten the enjoyment of heaven, and swell our songs of praise.

We may hence infer, that the death of a believer is to be considered, not as the penalty of the covenant of works, but as one fruit of the death of Christ and a blessing derived from the

covenant of redemption*. "Death is ours, for "we are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Death is one gradation of that life which Christ hath procured for us. It is the destruction of that moral disease which now impedes the sensibilities and actings of that life which we have received by regeneration.

"A true Christian man," (says the homily against the fear of death,) "who is the very "member of Christ, the temple of the Holy "Ghost," (1 Cor. iii.) "the son of God, and "the very inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, "conceiveth great and many causes undoubtedly "grounded upon the infallible and everlasting "truth of the word of God, which moveth him "not only to put away the fear of bodily death; "but also for the manifold benefits and singular "commodities which ensue unto every faithful "person by reason of the same, to wish, desire, "and long heartily for it. For death shall be to "him no death at all, but a very deliverance from "death, from all pains, cares, and sorrows, mi-"series and wretchedness of this world, and the "very entry into rest, and a beginning of ever-"lasting joy, a tasting of heavenly pleasures, so

* "Est ergo *mors nostra* beneficium, quod nobis juste "præstatur ex sententiâ Dei justâ propter mortem Christi "ad illius effectus nobis applicandos. Deus judicavit proper "mortem Filii sui nos debere mori. Hanc vero esse senten-"tiam verborum, (Gen. iii. 19,) quæ Deus Adamo et Evæ "prolocutus est post revelatam jam promissionem, quibus "ordinario putatur describi pœna, peccatoribus omnibus "propter peccatum imminens, ponit Cl. Cocceius Com. in "Rom. ad caput vi. § 19. Nolim dissimulare id mihi "valde placere. Nihil determino tamen. Perpendendum "est consideratius."——*Vitringa, Observationes Sacræ, Lib. secundus*, p. 138,—where the learned reader may see the thesis, *Cur fidelibus sit moriendum?* largely discussed.

" great that neither tongue is able to express,
" neither eye to see, nor ear to hear them, no nor
" any earthly man's heart to conceive them. So
" exceeding great benefits they be, which God
" our heavenly Father by his mere mercy and for
" the love of his Son Jesus Christ hath laid up in
" store, and prepared for them that humbly sub-
" mit themselves to God's will, and evermore
" unfeignedly love him from the bottom of their
" hearts. And we ought to believe that death,
" being slain by Christ cannot keep any man that
" stedfastly trusteth in Christ, under his per-
" petual tyranny and subjection, but that he shall
" rise again from death to glory at the last day
" appointed by Almighty God, like as Christ our
" head did rise again according to God's appoint-
" ment the third day. For St. Augustin saith,
" 'The head going before, the members trust to
" 'follow and come after.' And St. Paul saith,
" 'If Christ be risen from the dead, we shall rise
" 'also from the same.' And to comfort all
" Christian persons herein, Holy Scripture calleth
" this bodily death a sleep, wherein man's senses
" be, as it were, taken from him for a season, and
" yet when he awaketh he is more fresh than he
" was when he went to bed. So, although we
" have our souls separated from our bodies for a
" season, yet at the general resurrection we shall
" be more fresh, beautiful, and perfect than we
" be now. For now we be mortal; then we shall
" be immortal: now infected with divers infirmi-
" ties, then clearly void of all mortal infirmities.
" Now we be subject to all carnal desires, then
" we shall be all spiritual, desiring nothing but
" God's glory and things eternal. Thus is this
" bodily death a door of entering into life, and
" therefore not so much dreadful, if it be rightly

" considered, as it is comfortable; not a mischief,
" but a remedy for all mischief; no enemy, but a
" friend; not a cruel tyrant but a gentle guide,
" leading us not to mortality but to immortality;
" not to sorrow and pain, but to joy and pleasure,
" and that to endure for ever; if it be thankfully
" taken and accepted as God's messenger, and
" patiently borne of us for Christ's love, that
" suffered most painful death for our love, to
" redeem us from death eternal."

From this digression confessedly of an interesting nature, if not immediately connected with the assertion of our collect, we return to a further consideration of the preface under our review. The victory over death which God hath obtained " through his only begotten Son Jesus Christ," secures to us not only life in death, but also life from death; for in consequence thereof the bodies of the saints shall rise from the grave, and be made like unto Christ's glorious body. Then death and all its concomitants shall for ever be abolished. For that which " is sown in corrup-
" tion, shall be raised in incorruption: what is
" sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory:
" what is sown in weakness, shall be raised in
" power." 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. The victory which is obtained is indeed a gradual work, but a final triumph is secured. In the person of Christ, as the covenant head and representative of his people, it was complete when he arose. It is begun in his people during the present life, and consists partly in those joyful hopes and prospects which animate their souls. But it will not be perfected in them till that day when the earth and sea shall give up their dead.

" Through his only begotten Son Jesus Christ
" God hath opened unto us the gate of everlasting

" life." By the sin of the first Adam the passage to immortal happiness was closed up; and no finite understanding could have devised, no finite power have executed, a plan for the removal of those obstructions which threatened the exclusion of all the posterity of Adam from eternal bliss. Independently of the mediation of the only begotten Son of God, every human soul must have perished eternally. But, blessed be God, the gate of everlasting life is re-opened. The bars have been burst asunder by our victorious Leader, and the massive gates unfolded so as to present an unobstructed passage to all who believe in his name. No shadow of an impediment remains. Christ, as the representative of his redeemed, has entered triumphantly into everlasting life by virtue of his own obedience unto death: and through his merit, a new and living way, all believers enter with him. They enter into everlasting life by several gradations. They are now justified by his blood, and sanctified by his grace; at death their souls will be glorified together with him; and in the morning of the resurrection, their souls and bodies, being re-united, will enter together into a state of felicity to which all the preceding gradations have been preparatory.

" Who can behold what thou hast suffered and " we have escaped, and not be ravished with thy " love, O blessed Jesus! The way to heaven was " ever open to innocence; but we all had sinned " and come short of the glory of God. Heaven's " gates were shut against us, and hell's mouth " open to receive us. And in this estate our life " had been worse than death by the dreadful " expectations of deserved vengeance, and our " death had certainly delivered us up to feel what " we feared. Do we live with any comfort? It

" is thou that hast removed our fears. Can we " die with peace? It is thou alone hast renewed " our hopes. If heaven be now open to receive " any men that are, or ever were, or shall be, it " is not by the merits of their own innocence, " but by those of thy all-saving death*."

The mean by which these glorious achievements have been effected is pointed out in our collect. It is, " through his only begotten Son " Jesus Christ that God hath overcome death " and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life." We can form no conception of any other way by which our salvation could have been accomplished consistently with the honour of God. But by the incarnation, sufferings, and death of this divine person we see glory secured to every perfection of the Godhead, and the surest basis laid for human hope. " In him mercy and truth meet " together, righteousness and peace kiss each " other." By means of his mediation, " God " can be just and the justifier of him that be- " lieveth in Jesus." By the active obedience of the God-man, the law, from which sin derived its right of condemnation, was satisfied in its utmost demands. By his penal and vicarious sufferings, the curse of the law, of which corporeal death was a part, was exhausted of all its power. And by his resurrection from the dead the most satisfactory evidence hath been given that he hath accomplished the work which was given him to do: death was triumphed over in its own domains, and assurance given of its total abolition at the resurrection-day. The declaration of our Lord's expiring lips, " IT IS FINISHED," the truth of which was fully demonstrated by his resurrection,

* Dr. Comber on the Te Deum.

filled heaven with melody and hell with dismay. Well may we join together to celebrate his victory, and thus anticipate the song which will be ever new.

"God hath opened unto *us* the gate of ever-"lasting life." So the church teaches us to say, on a charitable supposition that all who use her service are true believers. But let not the reader conclude rashly and without an inquiry that he is such. Let him examine himself, "whether he be in the faith, and whether Jesus "Christ be formed in him the hope of glory." In this inquiry the prayer which follows the preceding recital of divine mercy will greatly assist him. It will indeed afford a satisfactory criterion of charcter. Therein we humbly beseech Almighty God, that, as "by his special grace "preventing us, he doth put into our minds good "desires, so by his continual help, we may "bring the same to good effect."

In this petition an acknowledgment is made of favours already conferred on us, and a request is offered for a communication of a further blessing. If we are justified in the acknowledgment we make, and sincere in the request we offer, we may safely conclude that God, "through his only "begotten Son Jesus Christ, hath opened unto "us the gate of everlasting life," and that we are entering through it.

Happy, thrice happy are those persons who can truly join in this grateful acknowledgment, and humbly praise God for putting into their minds good desires! Happy indeed are we, if we are "risen with Christ" in holy desire after the attainment of those blessings which his cross hath procured for us!—if "as new-born babes" we "desire the sincere milk of the word that we

"may grow thereby"—if with the Psalmist we can address God and say, "Whom have I in "heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth "that I desire in comparison of thee;"—then indeed we may bless God for "putting into our "minds good desires."

The persons who join in our collect are supposed to be converted persons—that is, to have felt the enlivening "power of Christ's resurrec-"tion." For they are supposed to be under the influence of "good desires," and no good desires prevail in the bosoms of unconverted persons. These are all "dead in trespasses and sins." And as an inanimate body feels no desires after those things which are necessary to the support of animal life, its existence and comfort; so the unregenerate soul feels no want of those blessings, for the enjoyment of which it was at first created, and without which it must perish eternally. But is this supposition true, reader, with respect to you? Are you athirst for pardon, holiness, and heaven? Are you conscious of desires which God only can satisfy?

For it is carefully to be remembered, that those "desires" only are "good" which have relation to the justification, sanctification, and glorification of our fallen souls. Heavenly things alone are durable, substantial, and satisfying. That only is "good" in the true sense of the word, which has a connexion with an immortal life. The favour and friendship of God, a conformity to his image, and an enjoyment of his presence, are the only objects that are worthy of an immortal mind. And every awakened soul can say with David, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so "panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul "is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God;

" when shall I come and appear before the pre-
" sence of God?" It is admitted that the en-
lightened mind doth not always feel the same degree of spiritual hunger and thirst; but it finds a dissatisfaction in every thing but God, and habitually longs for him as its portion for ever.

A state of heart in which spiritual desires predominate is a state of grace, for according to our collect it is the effect of God's " special grace." It not only proves that we have been partakers of those common influences of the Holy Ghost which the ungodly sometimes feel, but that we have received that " special grace" which bringeth salvation. Good desires are the seeds of eternal life. And " they who sow in tears shall " reap in joy. He that now goeth forth and " weepeth, bearing this precious seed, shall " doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing " his sheaves with him." Among the various characteristics by which the godly are distinguished from others in the Scriptures, there is none that is more frequently introduced than the activity of holy desire with which they are inspired. They seek after God. (See Psal. ix. 10; xiv. 2; xxiv. 6; xl. 16; lxiii. 1; lxix. 6. 32; lxx. 4; cxix. 2; Col. iii. 1; Heb. xi. 6.) And this trait of the converted character implies every other essential attribute of it, and differs from every thing of which a hypocrite can boast.

" Salvation is of the Lord," for his " special " grace preventing us puts into our minds good " desires." It precedes, so as to be the operative cause of all good within us; for " in our flesh " dwelleth no good thing." We are " his work-" manship created in Christ Jesus" unto good desires as well as " unto good works." And not

one good desire would ever have arisen in our fallen hearts, if his "special grace preventing us" had not put it within us. And oh! what comfort may the believing soul, the weakest of the flock, derive from the consideration which is here suggested by our collect! Your soul, trembling penitent, is "athirst for God." To be restored to his favour, and to be conformed to his image, is the holy ambition of your heart. Well—this desire is the fruit of his grace; not of common but of "special grace." It is a sure token of your resurrection with and through Christ to a state of spiritual life, and a pledge of future glory.

Having made our humble acknowledgments for mercies received, we proceed to beseech God that "by his continual help we may bring" the good desires which he has inspired into our hearts "to good effect;" that the seed of eternal life which is sown may not languish and die; but that, being watered continually, it may spring up and bring forth permanent fruit.

The blessing we implore is a progressive blessing. For in proportion as we are conformed to the image of God, and are enabled to glorify him, our "good desires" are brought "to good "effect." And this is a gradual work which will not be accomplished till "Christ who is our life "shall appear, and we shall appear with him in "glory." Then, and not till then, will those desires which "special grace" has formed within us be fulfilled. Then will the seed sown produce its proper fruit in full perfection. Then only (will every true penitent say) "shall I be "satisfied, when I awake up after thy likeness." The initial state of grace is the vernal season of the soul, in which the tree of righteousness buds

and blossoms with holy desires. The future state of glory is the autumnal season, in which these blossoms will, through the influence of the Sun of righteousness, be brought to perfection, and be matured in the paradise of God.

The necessity of God's "continual help" for the purpose of bringing good desire to good effect, is felt by every one in whom holy desire prevails. The tender blossoms of spring are exposed to the nipping frost and the blasting wind. They must be sheltered and cherished, or they will frustrate the hope of harvest. O how sweet to the conscious mind is that promise which God hath made respecting his vineyard! "I "the Lord do keep it! I will water it every "moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night "and day." In the faithfulness of this promise let the believer rejoice, and take encouragement therefrom to pray for God's "continual help." And he may be assured of a favourable answer to his prayers; for "he who hath begun the "good work in us will perfect it unto the day of "Jesus Christ."

We implore this blessing "through Jesus "Christ our Lord." We plead the merit of a risen Saviour. He is the meritorious and exemplary cause of our resurrection to newness of life through all its stages. It is by "the power of "his resurrection" that we feel "good desires," and by the same that they are brought to "good "effect." It is conformably to his death and resurrection that his redeemed "die to sin" "and "live again unto righteousness." Virtue still proceeds from him, whereby the dead are made alive and the sick are healed.

We ascribe therefore to him, as living and reigning with the Father and the Holy Ghost,

all the glory. He "liveth;"—for "being raised "from the dead he dieth no more, death hath no "more dominion over him." He liveth to be, as the second Adam, "a quickening Spirit" in all his redeemed. "He ever liveth to make in-"tercession for them," and thereby to secure to them the blessings of his cross. He "reigneth" in them and over them, and must reign till all "his enemies become his footstool," and his members, without the loss of one individual, be glorified together with him.

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Almighty Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification; grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth, through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THERE are two very important respects among others, in which the public services of our church accord with the Scriptures, and which shew that the former are a pure stream issuing from the fountain of the latter. The first of these is the use which is made of Christ in our liturgy. He is "ALL IN ALL" throughout her forms: "the "alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, "the first and the last," in all her confessions of faith, her supplications and thanksgivings. "Without him" our church, like a genuine branch of the true vine, "can do nothing." The second point of resemblance here referred to between these closely parallel lines, the liturgy and the Bible, is the end for which Christ is introduced. He is introduced for practical purposes. In both these volumes an intimate connexion is constantly maintained between doctrine and experience, faith and holiness, justification and sanctification.

Christ is not made a nominal but a real Saviour—a Saviour from the power as well as the guilt of sin. The Sun of righteousness is

exhibited, not with a painted radiance that yields no influence, but "with healing in his wings." From the destructive tenets of the self-justiciary and the Antinomian our church is equidistant and equally abhorrent.

Enamoured of the subject which has lately been presented to view, a crucified and risen Saviour, our church again* calls our attention to this two-fold object. Like Lot's wife, but under the influence of far different motives from those which actuated that unhappy woman, she looks back from behind her. As she is passing from Calvary and the garden of Joseph towards mount Olivet, she again and again takes a retrospect of those awful and joyful events which she has before commemorated. As she passes onward, Christ is "her theme, her inspiration, and her "song."

Our collect for the first Sunday after Easter reminds us anew of the great love of God in giving "his only Son to die for our sins, and "to rise again for our justification;" and on this review it founds a prayer for sanctifying grace.

The preface of our collect is couched in the words of St. Paul, Romans iv. 25, where he speaks of Christ as "delivered for our offences, "and raised again for our justification." We shall not here repeat what has been already said on the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. But as the subject of justification thereby has not been brought immediately before us in our meditations on either of the preceding col-

* "The Sunday after Easter, commonly called *Dominica* "*nova*, and *Dominica in Albis*, was observed with great "solemnity (in the primitive church) as the conclusion of "the Paschal Festival."—*Bingham*, vol. ii. p. 318.

lects, we shall now make a few remarks on this most interesting topic.

Justification is the reverse of condemnation, and the necessity of the former supposes the antecedent existence of the latter. Whatever view we take of Christ, while we are reminded of his love and of our obligations to him, we are also reminded of our natural guilt, misery and helplessness. And indeed Christ can be the object of our faith and love only as this recollection exists in our minds and is lively. "They "that are whole need not a physician, but they "that are sick." We put our trust in him according to the degree in which we perceive our need of him. If that perception or consciousness be deep and abiding, the eye of the soul will be directed to Jesus, and fixed on him with eager and persevering attention. We love him in proportion as we are sensible of the love wherewith he hath first loved us. Love to Christ is not to be distinguished from gratitude for favours received. It does not appear that the Scripture has any where spoken of a disinterested love as occupying the bosoms either of men or angels. From the nature of things this is exclusively an attribute of him who cannot be benefited by his creatures, nor be laid under any obligations to them. Let us therefore advert to the necessity of justification, before we explain its nature. For such a review will be calculated for utility both to saints and sinners. It will conduce to enliven the gratitude and joy of the former, and to excite the latter earnestly to seek after the inestimable benefit of acceptance with God for and "through the merits of his Son "Jesus Christ our Lord."

We all lie by nature in a state of condemnation on account of our sins original and actual; that is to say, we were the objects of divine wrath, and exposed to the "vengeance of eter-"nal fire." The justice of God peremptorily demanded satisfaction, and his truth bound him to fulfil his awful threatenings. Such was the state of mankind independent of the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was an impossibility of averting "the wrath to come" by any sufferings or obedience of our own. It was not therefore without the most urgent necessity that Christ interposed. He did not become incarnate, live and die, for the purpose of effecting what might have been effected without his aid. We were "*without strength*," when Christ died "for the ungodly,"—utterly destitute of ability to make atonement for sin, or to render ourselves acceptable to God. Legal sacrifices were inefficient, for "it was not possible that the "blood of bulls and of goats should take away "sin." No tears, no sorrows, no penances of the transgressor, could avail to expiate his guilt, because the requisition of the law was perfect obedience, and no provision was made in it for a commutation of its claim. The vicarious obedience of an angel, if an angel could have been found who would have undertaken our cause, must have failed of accomplishing the work of redemption; for the evil of sin, as an offence against God, is too heinous to be removed by the sufferings of a creature, and whatever a creature can perform for God is due on his own account, and can therefore have no superfluous merit to be imputed to another. Our case therefore was desperate without Christ. Every ray of hope which the human mind receives

must be reflected on it from the atoning cross. We profess to be Protestants, and as such to believe that "there is one Mediator between "God and man, the man Christ Jesus." But are we sincere in this profession? Is there not reason to fear that some, while in name they renounce the errors of Popery, in fact embrace its most obnoxious tenets*?

Let the humble believer in Jesus, after reading this brief statement of man's desperate condition in consequence of sin, recal to his mind "the "wormwood and the gall." Let him anew prostrate himself before the cross of Christ with devout ascriptions of praise. And let the unbeliever, who is either careless about salvation, or trusts in his own righteousness, consider his present state, and tremble at the sight of the burning lake.

Justification, in the theological sense of the word, is the sentence of acquittal from guilt incurred and wrath denounced, and a restoration to the forfeited favour of God. In both these views of the subject our justification is the fruit of our Lord's obedience unto death. There are indeed some modern divines who rob Christ of half his glory, and the sinner's hope of half, if not the whole, of its basis. For they teach that the work of Christ has only removed the guilt of sin, and then left the pardoned criminal to procure, by his own obedience a title to eternal

* Let the reader compare the tenets of Popery on the subject of justification as they are stated by Hooker, (vol. iii. p. 434, &c. Oxford edit. of his works) with the creed of many modern Protestants, and he will be struck with the coincidence. It would be a happy circumstance for the church of England, if the works of this eminent divine were more generally known.

glory. But this mutilated view of justification may be opposed both by positive texts of Scripture and positive declarations of our church*. For Christ is "the righteousness of all them that "truly do believe in him. He for them paid "their ransom by his death. He for them ful- "filled the law in his life. So that now in him "and by him every true Christian man may be "called a fulfiller of the law, forasmuch as that "which their infirmity lacked, Christ's justice "hath supplied†"—not by way of supplement to some thing of our own, but to the exclusion of all personal righteousness whatever.

"Justification" then "consists of these two "parts, remission and acceptance. We have "them both joined together, Eph. i. 6, 7. He "hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom "we have redemption through his blood, even "the forgiveness of sins. Remission of sins takes "away our liableness to death; acceptation of "our persons gives us a title unto life. Now to "be free from our obnoxiousness to death, and "instated in a right to eternal life, these two "constitute a perfect justification. For to be "acceptable of God in Christ is no other than for "God, through the righteousness and obedience "of Christ imputed to us, to own and acknow- "ledge us to have a right to heaven. And there- "fore we have mention of a pardon and an inhe- "ritance together in St. Paul's commission to "his ministry, (Acts xxvi. 18,) that they may "receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance "among them that are sanctified. It is not there-

* See Hooker, vol. iii. 436, 437, quoted p. 170, of this volume.

† See the homily of salvation, in which the mode of justification is stated with the greatest accuracy.

"fore, O soul, a bare negative righteousness "that God intends thee in the pardon of thy sins; "it is not merely to remove the curse and wrath "thy sins have deserved (though that alone can "never sufficiently be admired); but the same "hand that plucks thee out of hell by pardon, "lifts thee up to heaven by what he gives thee "together with thy pardon, even a right and "title to a blessed and glorious inheritance. Thy "pardon thou hast from the passive obedience of "Christ in his sufferings. A right to heaven "thou hast through the active obedience of "Christ in fulfilling all righteousness. And "through both hast thou obtained a complete "justification; God looked upon thee as innocent "through the satisfaction of his Son, and as "worthy through his obedience, both which are "made thine by faith*."

Blessed be God, that such a change of state as that which hath been described is possible to be obtained,—that it is certain to him who seeks it aright,—that every believer in Jesus is actually brought into it. He is "passed from death unto "life." Whatever may be comprehended under the term *death* was naturally his portion, his present and eternal portion. But so great is the transition which he hath experienced, that all this is abolished; and whatever is included in the term *life* is now, and shall eternally be, his rich and glorious inheritance. How strange is it that this all-important subject should be uninteresting to any of the guilty sons of Adam!—that this sweet theme should want attractions for fallen man!—that it should be considered as a needless speculation in divinity!—that disserta-

* Bishop Hopkins on the Lord's Prayer, page 92.

tions on morality should be preferred to the Gospel of Jesus Christ!—nay, that opposition should be raised against the gratuitous nature of the salvation which is revealed, and that attempts should be made to depreciate its riches, and to rob it of its glorious peculiarities!—Do *I* know how I may be accepted with God, and do *I* enjoy the inestimable benefit?

How gross an insult to the understanding and feelings of a capital convict would a discourse on the nature of his duty, the estates he once possessed, and the honour to which he had been entitled, prove! Equally galling to the conscious mind are lectures on morality, the duties and rewards of the covenant of works, while the attainder of the divine law rests on it with an insupportable weight, and no method of justification is proposed that is adapted to its state. Blessed be God, that justification by faith in the vicarious sufferings and obedience of a divine surety is the grand topic both of the Bible and of our church! Both lay their foundation in the merit of the Redeemer, and then build thereon a superstructure of personal obedience. In both salvation by grace and the necessary effects of faith are so clearly stated, that every important mistake must arise either from gross inattention or wilful perverseness.

That justification is the act of God, as our collect has stated it to be, needs no proof. For the creditor only can remit the debt which is due to him, and may appoint his own terms. Now as the whole human race is in a state of bankruptcy, surely it becomes us to inquire what those terms of remission are which the great Creditor has revealed. Indifference to the subject is an insult to his Majesty, and a high aggravation of our

guilt. What, then, does the Gospel, the law of faith, the directory of life, say on the momentous subject? It informs us that God is holy, just, and true, and that therefore a reparation of the dishonour done to his law by sin, and a full satisfaction to his justice, are indispensably requisite in the method of salvation. But, while the eye of the criminal, wild with despair, is looking round for hope without discovering a single ray, a voice full of sweetness and distinctly audible, proceeds from mount Calvary, crying, "It is finished." "I have finished the "transgression, and made an end of sins; I "have made reconciliation for iniquity and "brought in everlasting righteousness." Dan. ix. 25. "God is just and the justifier of him "that believeth in me." "I have paid the "ransom: deliver them from going down to the "pit." "Let justice make its utmost demand, "I have a receipt in full to shew, signed with "the Creditor's royal signature, and attested by "credible witnesses."

The obedience and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ constitute the sole cause of our justification before God. The Gospel excludes from its system every notion of human worthiness. "By thine agony and bloody sweat; by "thy cross and passion; by thy precious death "and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and "ascension, good Lord deliver us," will be the only plea of conscious sinners in relation to justification before God.

But it may be asked, if the obedience of Christ unto death be the sole and all-sufficient cause of our justification before God, what has his resurrection to do with the subject? And why has the Apostle and our collect asserted

that Christ was raised for our justification? In solving this difficulty it will be sufficient to observe, that though the tower-stamp adds no intrinsic value to a piece of gold, yet it is necessary to certify its value and to give it currency. In like manner our Lord's resurrection added nothing to the merit of his sufferings, which arose from the divinity of his person; but it was necessary to assure us that his offering hath been accepted, and the work of redemption assigned to him fully accomplished. Had a surety undertaken to pay your debt, and been committed to prison till he had fulfilled his engagement, his liberation would be necessary to prove that the debt was actually liquidated. The resurrection of Christ demonstrated both the divinity of his mission, and the fulfilment of his arduous work.

Having made these brief remarks on the doctrine of justification, a doctrine which from its importance and extent requires a volume instead of an essay, we proceed to consider the prayer which our collect founds on the foregoing preface. We pray that our "Almighty Father" would "grant us so to put away the leaven of "malice and wickedness, that we may always "serve him in pureness of living and truth, "through the merits of the same his Son Jesus "Christ our Lord."

The idea of this request is suggested by the exhortation of St. Paul, (1 Cor. v. 7, 8,) "Purge "out the old leaven, that ye may be a new "lump as ye are unleavened. For even Christ "our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore "let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, "neither with the leaven of malice and wicked-"ness; but with the unleavened bread of sin-

"cerity and truth." This exhortation of the Apostle our collect has converted into a prayer, which, as we have frequently observed, is the result of true wisdom, since obedience can only be produced by grace communicated to our hearts. We shall not discuss the analogy between Christ and the paschal lamb, remarkable and instructive as that analogy is, because it does not lie at present in our way. Nor shall we review the typical connexion between the paschal feast and the Lord's supper, though the Apostle in the foregoing exhortation plainly intimates such a connexion. But we shall confine our attention to the prayer of our collect.

We pray for grace that we may "put away "the leaven of malice and wickedness." In order to explain the phraseology which is here used, it is necessary to observe, that the Jews were required by the divine law, under pain of death, to forbear the use of leaven*, and to put it away out of their houses, for seven days during the paschal solemnity. Exod. xii. 15–19. This ceremonial requisition was designed to teach the necessity of moral purity in those who partake of the true passover. In obedience to this command, the Jews were very careful in scrutinizing their houses, as their own writers inform us, for the purpose of removing every particle of leaven from them†. And should we

* Leaven is sour fermenting matter, used for the purpose of lightening bread. Figuratively applied, it is any mixture which makes a general change in the mass, and generally means something which depraves or corrupts that with which it is mixed.

† "The Jews began to cleanse their houses from all "leaven on the 13th of Nisan; every place was carefully "examined, lest any thing leavened should remain in "corners, or in cupboards: so that on the 14th of Nisan at

be less diligent and anxious in purging our hearts from the corrupted and corrupting leaven of sin, seeing we profess to be true Israelites, and to be partakers of an interest in the anti-typical paschal Lamb, and of salvation through his blood from a worse bondage than that of Egypt?

But this we know our inability to do, if indeed we are taught of God; and therefore we address him in the language of supplication, that he would grant us his grace whereby we may be enabled to do it. It was easy for an Israelite who was solicitous to comply with the divine command, to discover and remove every crumb of leaven from his house. But it is impossible for us either to discover or remove "the leaven of malice and wickedness" from our hearts by our wisdom and strength. And hence arises a necessity of joining in the Psalmist's prayer, (Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24,) "Search "me, O God, and know my heart: try me, "and know my thoughts, and see if there be "any wicked way in me, and lead me in the "way everlasting." Or, as he elsewhere expresses the same desire, (Psal. xix. 12,) "Who "can understand his errors? cleanse thou me "from secret faults." Divine light is necessary

"noon there was none in the house. The Jews at this day "religiously observe this practice; to which St. Paul in "some places alludes, saying, 'A little leaven leaveneth the "'whole lump;' *i. e.* if there were but a small portion of "leaven in a quantity of bread or paste during the passover, "it was thereby corrupted and rendered unclean: it was "thrown away and burned."—*Calmet's Dictionary.*

See also Ainsworth's Annotations on Exodus xii. 15, &c. where the reader will find some large quotations from Maimonides and other Jewish doctors on this subject.

to the discovery of sin, and divine power to its subjugation.

This will appear still clearer, if we consider the nature of the evil which we are to "put "away" from us. The words "malice and "wickedness" are not used in our collect, and in the passage of St. Paul on which the collect is founded, in a restricted but in a general sense, for the principle of natural corruption*. This, like leaven, is incorporated with the whole mass of our constitution, body, soul, and spirit. Hence it is called "the flesh," "the natural man," "the old man." When we speak of corruption we speak of ourselves; for "in us, that is, "in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing." To put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, is therefore to put away self; to "put off the "old man," to "mortify our" own "members." To unleaven a mass which hath been leavened is difficult, but to purge out the old leaven of sin from our hearts is impossible to human ability. We see, therefore, the propriety with which the Apostolic exhortation is converted into prayer.

It is supposed that those persons who use our collect are under the influence of earnest desire after purity of heart and life. Let the reader inquire whether this supposition be just respecting himself. The Gospel, while it affords new

* "Κακια, malice or maliciousness, is used in this gene-"ral sense, 1 Peter ii. 16. And πονηρια is generally so "used. Κακια, est naturalis vitiositas; πονηρια est aliquid "pejus: *Malus* est quisquis malè agit, *nequam* qui cum "dolo malo agit, vel qui accersitâ et voluntariâ pravitate "peccat contra conscientiam: Unde et Diabolus πονηρος "dicitur."—*Poli Syn.* in 1 Cor. v. 8.

grounds of hope, suggests also new motives of action, and as it is credited effectually enforces those motives. The end of redemption is sanctification. If indeed we believe that "Christ "our passover is sacrificed for us," we shall be solicitous to "put away the old leaven."

For it is to be observed, that we do not pray for divine power to act on us as on inanimate or irrational beings, but that God would grant that "*we* may put away the leaven of malice and "wickedness." We implore grace whereby we may be instructed and enabled to "crucify the "flesh with the affections and lusts." The act of removal is ours, but both the will and power to do it must come from God. If we are sincere in praying for power to subdue corruption, we are daily fighting against it.

But what is our ultimate object in this request? What is the desire of those among us who believe that God gave "his only Son to "die for our sins and to rise again for our justifi-"cation?" It is invariably this, "that we may "always serve him in pureness of living and "truth." While the leaven of natural corruption remains unsubdued, we cannot "serve" him. For "the carnal mind is enmity against "God: it is not subject to the law of God, "neither indeed can be." The love and power of sin therefore must be subdued, before we can engage cordially in his service. When this is effected, then we become the servants of God, and our members are made instruments of righteousness unto him. Then we become "a pecu-"liar people, zealous of good works."

"Pureness of living and truth" in the latter clause of our request are opposed to "malice

"and wickedness" in the former*. It is not only necessary that as Christians we should manifest all outward purity in our lives, but also that there be "truth" or sincerity in the inward parts. A whited sepulchre is an abomination in the sight of God. What say our hearts to this request? Are we anxious to have our souls purged from the leaven of sin, and to become new creatures? If this be not the desire of our souls, we are unacquainted with the privileges, duties, and obligations of Christianity—we have no part in the great passover, and derive no benefit from the death and resurrection of the Son of God.

We implore sanctifying grace "through the "merits of the same his Son Jesus Christ our "Lord." He is of God made unto us sanctification as well as justification. He is the meritorious cause of both; and while his resurrection assures us of the all-sufficiency of the latter, faith in his name through the purchased influence of his Spirit puts us in possession of the former. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, "we are changed into the same image, from glory "to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

* "Prius opponitur κακια, alterum πορνια. Ειλικρινια "est fuga impuritatis, αληθια simulationis."—*Poli Syn.* in 1 Cor. v. 8.

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin and also an ensample of godly life: give us grace, that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the confirmation of the faith of Hezekiah the course of nature was miraculously reversed. (Isa. xxxviii. 8.) A similar retrogression in our meditations on the course of the Sun of righteousness, as it is marked in the sun dial of our church's calendar, may be productive of the same effect in our souls. It may tend to confirm our faith, and to establish our hopes. With this view we are led again to contemplate the death of Christ.

Christians are followers of Christ. "They "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Rev. xiv. 4. Thereby they are distinguished from all other persons, so that they may easily ascertain their own character and be known by others. To "follow the Lamb" implies two things, *viz.* faith in his atonement, as the sacrificed "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin "of the world;" and an imitation of his example, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate "from sinners." These two things, faith and practice, constitute the character of a Christian.

This two-fold end for which "God gave his "only Son" corresponds with a two-fold desire which is formed in the bosom of every true believer. And the unison which prevails between the design of divine mercy as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and the feelings of a penitent sinner, affords irrefragable evidence that the Gospel is of God, and that he who made the human soul is the author of that plan of salvation which is proposed to it. The relation between a curious mould and the figure which is cast in it is not more apparent to the eye, than that which exists between the fallen soul of man and the gospel-salvation is to the conscious mind. The same all-wise Being who formed the soul must have contrived that plan of salvation which is found on trial to be suitable to its multifarious wants and miseries. Thus "he that believeth "hath the witness in himself" concerning "the "record which God hath given of his Son."

The end for which God gave his only Son was, that he might "be unto us both a sacri-"fice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life." And the desire of every awakened soul is "most "thankfully to receive that his inestimable bene-"fit," and also "daily to follow the blessed steps "of his most holy life."

Our collect for the second Sunday after Easter consists of an introduction and a prayer. The introduction exhibits Christ in a two-fold point of view, on which a two-fold petition is founded.

Christ is first exhibited as "a sacrifice for "sin;" for his atonement must be received before his example can be imitated. A foundation must be laid by faith in his death, before a superstructure can be raised by a conformity to his life. "The mercies of God," as they are

manifested in redemption, afford the only motives which can induce a sinner to "present his body "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God," though such a surrender is undoubtedly "the "reasonable service" of all rational creatures.

In order fully to understand the first view which our collect takes of Christ, it will be necessary to have recourse to those sacrifices which were offered, under the Old Testament dispensation, as typical figures of him. The rites of sacrificature were enjoined immediately after the fall, because a knowledge of the true sacrifice was immediately necessary to the salvation of fallen man. That the institution of sacrifice should have been of human invention, is in itself a highly improbable position. For the expectation of appeasing an offended God by the blood of a brute animal, can have no foundation in reason, nor in any views which the mind naturally forms of Deity. But we have positive evidence that the institution is divine. For the first sacrifice which is recorded to have been offered, though doubtless not the first that was offered, was offered by faith (Heb. xi. 4); and we know that faith must have its warrant in the command and promise of God. The patriarchal sacrifices were acceptable to God; and as will-worship cannot please him, we may be assured that those sacrifices were a compliance with his positive requisition. Moreover, the arbitrary distinction which was established between clean and unclean animals, had an immediate relation to the law of sacrifices, and we know that this distinction preceded the deluge*.

* See several notes on this subject annexed to Dr. Magee's second Discourse on the Atonement; and Jones's Zoologia Ethica, in the third volume of his works.

The animals which were appointed to be offered in sacrifice, were to be of the clean tribes and without blemish. Now these were all useful for food, and in them consisted the chief riches of the early ages. In the descriptions which the Scripture hath given of Christ, the true Lamb of God, the great sacrifice for the sin of the world, such circumstances are particularised as shew the correspondence that was divinely intended to exist between the type and the antitype. Christ is "a lamb without blemish and "without spot." He was "chosen of God and "precious." He "was led as a lamb to the "slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers "is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." For "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; "when he suffered, he threatened not; but com-"mitted himself to him that judgeth righteously." He was the firstling of the flock, being "the first-"born among many brethren."

The rite of sacrificature was altogether of a typical kind. Thereby the Gospel was preached to those who lived before the era of the Messiah. Therein by significant actions every material point of doctrine, respecting the person and work of Christ, and also respecting justification by faith in him, was taught. The sins of the offerer were laid on the head of the appointed victim, and therefore the victim itself is called *sin*, and *guilt*. And as none but the guilty can properly be punished, and as brute animals are impeccable, the infliction of death on an ox or a sheep speaks for itself, and plainly demonstrates the typical imputation of sin. A transfer of guilt being made to the appointed victim, its blood was shed; for "without shedding of blood "there was no remission." The death of the

vicarious victim was required, because the life of the personated criminal was forfeited. The slain victim was then laid on the altar of God, where it was either wholly or partly, as the circumstance required, consumed by fire, and in some few instances by fire miraculously kindled. The smoke of the altar then ascended to heaven, a sweet savour to God*.

The application of these particulars is so easy, that we need not enlarge upon it. We shall therefore proceed to observe that the end of sacrificing was expiation or atonement; and that when the sacrifice had been offered, a feast was made of the peace offerings which were not consumed on the altar. Thus those, who through faith in the Lamb of God are justified by his blood, feast on him while they partake of the symbols of his love in the Lord's supper. It was the remark of an eminent divine that nothing happened to the Messiah which was not predicted, either verbally or by typical representation; and that nothing was thus predicted of him which has not been fulfilled.

"God hath given his only begotten Son to be "unto us a sacrifice for sin." The oblations under the law had no value but what they derived from

* On this most interesting subject to every true Christian the relation between the Jewish sacrifices and their great anti-type, much curious and profitable instruction is contained in Vitringa's Observationes Sacræ, lib. ii. cap. 13–15. The Author has made use not only of the Scripture account, but also of the descriptions of the sacrifical rites given by the Jewish writers, for the purpose of illustrating his subject. Whether this valuable work, which is written in Latin, has yet been translated into English, the Author of these pages is not competent to say. But if it has not, he thinks a translation of it would be a valuable addition to our stock of theological treatises.

him who is the substance of all those shadows. The blood of bulls and goats could not put away sin. But our Lord Jesus Christ hath, "by the "one oblation of himself once offered, made a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, "and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." The necessity of such a sacrifice exhibits in the fullest and clearest manner the guilt and misery of man, while it also shews "the height and "depth, the length and breadth, of the love of "Christ, which passeth knowledge."

"God gave his only Son to be unto us also an "ensample of godly life." Such in their degree were the sacrifices of the Mosaic law; for moral instruction was certainly intended to be conveyed by that distinction of animals into the classes of clean and unclean which was established by the Mosaic code. It had a primary reference to the qualities of the great Atoner, and a secondary one to the character of those who profess to believe on his name; the instincts of the unclean tribe shewing them what they are not to be, and those of the clean animals exhibiting "what man-"ner of persons they ought to be in all holy con-"versation and godliness*." These, however, were only shadows of a brighter pattern which has now been held up for our imitation. Christ is the "ensample of godly life" from which instruction on the whole circle of duty richly emanates.

It was the gracious purpose of God to make those whom he redeemed by the blood of his Son a happy people. This he could not do without making them a holy people. He has

* This is demonstrated in a most ingenious and edifying disquisition on the subject, in the third volume of the works of the late Rev. W. Jones.

therefore made provision in the covenant of grace for their sanctification as well as for their justification; and of both Christ is the appointed fountain, out of which we are to "receive, and grace "for grace." He, "of God, is made unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and re- "demption." In consequence of his sacrifice for sin the gift of the Holy Spirit is procured for fallen man, of which "it pleased the Father that "all fulness should dwell in Christ" for our regeneration and sanctification. By a revelation of Christ as the sacrifice for sin, his redeemed are inspired with love to his person, name, and character; and love begets imitation. In the law of God they have a perfect rule of duty; and that this rule may be the more fully understood, and be furnished with every powerful attractive, holiness has been personified in the conduct of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That the example of our Lord was designed for our imitation is expressly and frequently asserted, though, alas! it is regarded in this light by few among those persons who bear his name. If the end for which God gave his only Son were to be inferred from the general conduct of Christians, it would not be supposed that the latter of those mentioned in our collect had any place in the divine mind. But the statement of our church is accurate. For Christ hath "left us an example "that we should follow his steps." 1 Peter ii. 21. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of "Christ," says St. Paul to the Corinthians. "He "that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself "also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John ii. 6. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of "me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye

" shall find rest unto your souls," says the adorable Saviour of himself.

The example which our Lord hath set us is bright and alluring. It is calculated to afford instruction in every station and relation, with respect both to God and man, to friends and foes. It is a lively and perfect comment on both the tables of the moral law; for the whole Decalogue was written on his heart and exhibited in his life. Both morality and holiness shone in him with a steady lustre. He was a sun without spots, which constantly poured forth its radiance in every direction. In the mirror of his history, the child, the youth, the man, may discern a perfect pattern of conduct. In the man Christ Jesus " the beauty of holiness" was displayed in the fullest manner. May we gaze till we are transformed into the same image!

Our church has wisely conjoined the two-fold object of Christ's mission. For an imitation of Christ is essentially necessary to prove that we have a saving interest in his sacrifice. Faith is not a merely speculative assent to the truth of certain propositions which are made to the mind, but it " worketh by love." The same mind " which was also in Christ Jesus" is genuine religion. All pretensions to godliness without this are vain. This only is sterling and will bear the test of examination; all without it is counterfeit and reprobate.

We proceed now to consider the prayer of our collect, which, like the introductory part, is two-fold, and is founded on the two-fold view of Christ which is before presented. We pray for " grace, that we may always most thankfully " receive the inestimable benefit," *viz.* the sacri-

fice of the Son of God for sin; "and also daily "endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps "of his most holy life."

First, we pray "that we may always most "thankfully receive the inestimable benefit of "Christ's sacrifice." The manner in which the sacrifice of Christ is here characterised may be compared with what the Apostle says, (2 Cor. ix. 15,) "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable "gift." By "the unspeakable gift" some commentators understand that charitable disposition to which St. Paul had been exhorting the Corinthians; while others suppose that, by a sudden and abrupt transition, not uncommon in the Scriptures*, he refers to "the inestimable gift" of Christ, which is introduced as the strongest motive to that liberality which he wished to promote and cherish in their minds.

If Christ, the fountain of salvation, be the free gift of God, then is salvation itself, in all its branches, also a free gift. For generals include particulars. How contrary then is the pride and arrogance of the self-justiciary to the forms of our church, and to the foundation of all truth laid in the Scriptures, on which our church has built her fabric of doctrines!

The attribute of this comprehensive gift of God, the sacrifice of his Son, bespeaks the munificence of the adorable Donor. It is such as cannot be particularly described nor fully expressed. It is unspeakable, nay, it is "inesti-"mable." Its importance is unutterable and inconceivable. Of this we may judge by contemplating the circumstances in which we should be placed without it, in life, in death, and to

* See Cant. i. 2; iii. 3; John xx. 15.

all eternity. As guilty, helpless, and polluted creatures, we could have no source of comfort, and should be exposed both to present and eternal misery. On the other hand, the situation to which we are raised by means thereof, affords a perfect contrast to our natural misery. Heaven and hell are not further apart, nor more dissimilar. For those who "receive this inestimable "gift," are pardoned, accepted, sanctified, and comforted in the present life; and there is "laid "up for them a crown of glory that fadeth not "away." Now before the importance of this gift can be fully ascertained, an estimate must be made of the value of the soul—of the evil of sin—of the miseries of hell—of the glories of heaven—and of eternal duration as the attribute of both. But who is sufficient for these things? No one possessed of a finite understanding. God, therefore, only knows the value of his own gift. Place it in the balance against sin, for which it has atoned. Consider that "the wages of" every "sin is death." Then take into the account the number, enormity, and aggravations of your own sins, those of your heart and life. These are incalculable; but how small a proportion do they bear to the sins of the whole world, for which the sacrifice of Christ was "a full, perfect, and "sufficient satisfaction." Consider again the value of a single soul. Worlds of mortal and irrational beings are not to be compared with it. How inestimable its worth! The gift of Christ was the ransom-price, whereby the redemption of a lost world has been effected. How insufficient are all our powers of expression, calculation, and conception, when employed in the science of divine arithmetic!

If we contemplate the gift of Christ "to be

"unto us a sacrifice for sin," in a comparative view of its excellence, its superiority to all other benefits which we have received will plainly appear. Our "*creation*" with those powers and privileges which we originally possessed, was an inestimable favour. But existence without Christ would eventually have proved a curse instead of a blessing. Our "*preservation*" is also a cause for thankfulness; but our preservation in existence without a Saviour would only have increased our damnation. For if there was no sacrifice for sin, the sooner we were cast into hell the better, seeing that every hour spent on earth would aggravate our guilt. "*All the "blessings of this life*" are only such when viewed in connexion with "the inestimable gift." Irrespective of atonement they would be curses instead of blessings. The conscious mind could find no satisfaction in them, and could indulge no hope beyond them. But through the merit of the great sacrifice, and by faith therein, "creation, "preservation, and all the blessings of this life," are restored to their original nature, tendency, and issue. *In uno Christo omnia.* "CHRIST "IS ALL AND IN ALL."

In every view, then, the gift of Christ is an "inestimable gift." Neither saints on earth, nor saints in glory, can duly appreciate it. Our Lord himself, speaking in the fortieth Psalm, expresses the highest admiration of redeeming love:—"Many, O Lord my God, are thy won-"derful works which thou hast done, and thy "thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot "be reckoned up in order unto thee; if I should "declare and speak of them they are more than "can be numbered." Redemption is a subject "which can never be exhausted by the intellec-

"tual powers of men and angels; but will, to "both, afford matter of incessant meditation and "endless praise. Yet how little do we medi- "tate on its wonders! how seldom and how "coldly do we praise God for them*!" St. Paul also speaks of "the height and depth, and "length and breadth, of the love of Christ as "passing knowledge†." Eph. iii. 18, 19. Now, if the tongue of the seraphic Psalmist, speaking in the person of Christ and under the influence of the Holy Ghost was unable to describe this gift; if the enlarged mind of one who had been caught up into the third heaven, could not fully conceive of it, it may justly be styled "inestimable." The beloved disciple seems also at an utter loss for expression sufficiently forcible for his purpose,

* Dr. Horne on the fortieth Psalm, ver. 5.

† This passage of St. Paul is equally to be admired for the sublimity of its sense, and the beauty and variety of its charming figures, and excellencies of language. "By a "bold and beautiful metaphor, the dimensions of material "substances are raised above their native signification, and "ennobled by being applied to the mysteries of religion. "The goodness of God in his dear Son Jesus has its breadth "—it extends to all mankind; its length—it reaches to all "ages; its height and depth—he raises mankind from the "lowest abyss of misery and despair, to the highest emi- "nence of happiness and glory. Where it is remarkable, "that, though the dimensions of bodies are but three, the "sacred Author adds a fourth—height, whereby he more "emphatically expresses the greatness, the majesty, the "absolute and entire perfection, and the immense charity "of that wonderful work of our redemption; or, in the "better words of the inspired writer, the *unsearchable "riches of the love of Christ*: the knowledge of which "passes all other knowledge, both in its own immense "greatness, and the grand concern mankind has in it; and "can never be so perfectly known by created understand- "ings, as that they shall either fully comprehend, or duly "value such an adorable mystery and infinite blessing."—*Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, vol. i. p. 267.

when he says, "God *so* loved the world *as* to "give his only begotten Son." He could find no comparison; he could only relate the fact. Saints made perfect, and angels who surround the throne, are unable to shew forth half his praise who gave "his only Son to be a sacrifice for "sin." Eternal ages will not fully disclose, nor eternal praise fully acknowledge, the benefit of redemption.

How proper is our petition for "grace" "that "we may always most thankfully receive this "inestimable gift!" It resembles that of the Apostles, "Lord, we believe; help thou our "unbelief." To receive it in a manner suitable to its worth is impossible; but surely it should be our desire and endeavour constantly to embrace it with all the energies of our minds, wrought up to the highest pitch of grateful adoration.

A thankful reception of the "inestimable "benefit" implies a conviction of our need of it. If a present of a million sterling were offered to one who had, or supposed himself to have, a full sufficiency of money before, he would say, "Of what use can this additional sum be to me? "I want it not, bestow it where it is more "needed, and of consequence will be more accept-"able." Such is the language of the self-righteous heart respecting the "inestimable gift." I am rich, "and increased with goods, and have "need of nothing," is the groundless persuasion it maintains; while, in fact, it is "wretched and "miserable, poor and blind and naked." But there are others besides Pharisaic persons who make light of Christ. He is despised also and rejected by all who are in an unawakened state of soul. To one who is wholly unacquainted with the value of money, and the advantages

derivable from the possession of it in civilized society (as, for instance, to a South-Sea Islander,) the largest offer of a pecuniary kind would be unthankfully received. And in like manner the inestimable gift is treated by the generality of mankind. They hear of the love of God without emotion, and of the gift of Christ without any desire after an interest in him. A conviction of the worth of the soul, of its guilt, danger, and impotence, and also of the suitability of the "inestimable gift" to the wants and miseries of the lost soul, is an essential pre-requisite to a thankful reception of the sacrifice of Christ.

Moreover, faith in the "inestimable benefit," with a view to personal comfort and salvation, is implied in a thankful reception of it. Without this in a greater or less degree, no thankfulness will be excited by the tender of a Saviour. A man looking at a treasure, unconscious of any propriety in it, would feel no gratitude for the sight. But the persuasion "This is mine," would open the secret springs of joy in his bosom. While unbelief prevails, no thankfulness can be felt. It is "faith" which "worketh by love."

Some persons perhaps will say, We hope that we have received this "inestimable benefit" with thankfulness to the gracious giver. Let them know that the petition of our collect is not therefore superfluous, nor unsuitable to their lips. Even these persons, admitting that their hope is founded, have need to pray for grace. For it is certain that they have not received the "inestimable gift" so thankfully, nor embraced it so cordially, as it deserves. Nay, there are seasons when the believer is ready to quit his grasp, and seems to feel no gratitude for the Gospel-proposal. If any thing like this ever occurs in our

experience, surely it is "needful to pray" that we may *always* most "thankfully receive the "inestimable benefit," without being for a moment insensible of its value, or indifferent to its possession.

We proceed to implore "grace that we may "daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed "steps of his most holy life." This refers to the secondary end of the gift of Christ, as stated in the introductory part of our collect. He was given not only "to be a sacrifice for sin," but also "to be an ensample of godly life." And all who "thankfully receive the inestimable benefit" as "a sacrifice for sin," are anxious "themselves "to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life." The end of divine mercy is not answered with respect to us, unless our faith in Christ be productive of a constant imitation of him.

"The steps of Christ's most holy life" are "blessed" steps indeed; since wherever he trod, he left a blessing behind him. "He went about "doing good." To him the words of our great Poet may be applied with still stricter propriety than to her of whom he wrote them:—

> "Grace was in all *his* steps, heav'n in *his* eye,
> "In every gesture dignity and love." *Milton.*

Now wherever we see the print of our Lord's foot, there it is our privilege and duty to place our own. His "ensample of godly life" is admirably suited for our direction. It is an epitome of morality and godliness. In prosperity and adversity—in temptation and desertion —in our intercourse with God, and in our intercourse with men—in every age, rank, and station —his blessed example affords a perfect model of

what we should study both to be and to do. Did we, possessing a competent knowledge of the evangelic story, and earnestly looking up to God the Holy Ghost for direction, ask ourselves, "How would our great Exemplar act in our "circumstances?" we should never be at a loss for a clew whereby to guide our steps aright. But we often dread the inquiry, and therefore neglect to make it.

We pray for grace "that we may *endeavour* "to follow the blessed steps of our Lord's most "holy life." An exact imitation is unattainable. But an endeavour to follow him is essential to the character of a disciple. It is the criterion of grace received, for it can proceed only from divine grace, and is always the consequence of its influence.

Our prayer supposes in those that use it, both earnest desire and strenuous exertion, things which are inseparable. If we are sincere in this request, we keep the pattern which Christ hath set us before our eyes, as a scholar does the copy which his master has written; and while we labour to transcribe it in our own conduct, conscious of inability we implore a larger measure of grace that our imitation may continually become more and more exact.

To imitate Christ is a Christian's "*daily*" work. "He that saith, he abideth in him, "ought himself also to walk even as he walked." Every day, and hour, and moment, affords opportunities for an imitation of our pattern. The eye is not to be withdrawn from the copy for a moment, nor the work of imitation intermitted, till the transcript is complete; and that will not be till, following "the blessed steps of his most "holy life," we have followed him through the

valley of the shadow of death into his kingdom. For he hath not only shewn us how to live, but also how to die. With him we must cry, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," before the course of obedience will be finished.

Reader, is Christ your pattern? Are you endeavouring daily to copy it in your own life? Do you pray for grace that you may be enabled to do so? All who embrace his sacrifice endeavour to imitate his virtues, and these shall all partake of his glory.

If indeed you are engaged in this arduous work of imitating your Lord and Saviour, you mourn because you resemble him so little; for while gazing at his ensample you cannot but discern the imperfection of your attempts. If so, the words of our collect will be strongly recommended to your hearts, and your prayer for "grace through Jesus Christ our Lord" will ascend with fervency to the mercy-seat. Be encouraged by remembering, that when you see him as he is, you shall then be perfectly like him.

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Almighty God, who shewest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHRISTIAN experience is often paradoxical, and to those who are unacquainted with its nature must appear contradictory and absurd. With respect both to the law and the Gospel it contains mysteries which itself only can unravel. A believer, through faith in Christ Jesus, is freed from the law; and yet is bound by cords, which the same faith entwines around him, more strongly to the law than he was before he believed. By the Gospel of Christ he is emancipated from slavery; and yet, by the same Gospel he is brought under more powerful obligations to an unremitted obedience than any which nature had imposed on him. The Christian is dead and alive, bound and free, at the same time though in different respects. He ceases from his own works, and yet has work to do which requires constant attention and laborious exertion.

The work of a Christian is described in our collect. It is to " eschew all those things

which "are contrary to his profession, and to "follow all those things which are agreeable to "the same." It is to conform his conversation, or course of life, to the Gospel of Christ: to act as a good citizen of the new Jerusalem where he is now naturalized, being adopted into its community and invested with its privileges*. He is to frame his life according to the laws and usages of that new society to which he is introduced; and these are totally distinct from, and in direct opposition to, those of the society which he has quitted. For no two societies can be more opposite to each other in all their rules, maxims, and manners, than the world and the church of Christ.

But "who is sufficient for these things?" who that has considered the Gospel of Christ—the obligations which it imposes—the dignities which it bestows—the privileges with which it endows —the requisitions which it makes—and the duties which it enjoins—but must feel his own utter inability to walk worthy of it? To the man indeed who considers Christianity only in its creed and forms—who views it as a system of worldly policy, or at best as a scheme of refined morality—the task may appear easy. But the man, who examines it closely, and finds that it is designed to regulate the heart as well as the life, and to give an entirely new tendency to both, will despair of succeeding in an attempt to practise its duties by his own strength. He might as well endeavour to change the laws of gravitation, to make a rapid stream ascend the side of a steep mountain, or the falling rock mount upwards. He will therefore discern the neces-

* Phil. i. 27. Πολιτευεσθε.

sity of continual prayer to God for the aids of his grace, that he may be enabled to "adorn the "doctrine of God his Saviour in all things."

With the dictates of that wisdom which cometh from above we comply, while we offer up the collect which is appointed for our use on this day. It consists of a preface and a prayer. The preface gratefully records the grace of God in communicating divine knowledge to sinners with a view to their salvation. The prayer, founded on a supposition that this knowledge has been imparted to our souls, implores further grace, in order that our conversation may be conformed to our profession.

We have for some time past been engaged in tracing the stream of salvation to its rise. And if the adventurous and laborious Bruce thought himself amply repaid for all the fatigues and dangers of a long and painful journey by a discovery of the object which he sought, the sources of the celebrated Nile, though they proved to be inconsiderable springs, how much more must the Christian, who, under the conduct of our church, has been led to the fountain of the river of life which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, be gratified and delighted with the discovery that he hath made! Is it to be wondered at, if, in the company of his conductor, he has lingered on the margin of that stupendous spring, from which those streams originate which make glad the city of God;—if, lost in wonder and adoring gratitude, he has been for a while fixed to the spot, and unable to pursue his way? Having surveyed the fountain of life, we are now however called to contemplate the method of grace; to follow the stream, as it flows in the channel of Christian experience through the

course of a holy life, beautifying and enriching in its progress the church of God. Our collects for several successive Sundays that are past, have related chiefly to the person and work of Christ, and the love of God as it is manifested in him. Those that follow to Ascension Day describe the work of his Spirit, and the practical effects which are produced by faith in Christ on the heart and life of a believer. In these we implore grace that we "may walk worthy of the Lord unto all "pleasing."

It is the prerogative of "Almighty God to "shew to them that be in error the light of "truth." Whether we consider the external manifestation of the light of truth which is made in the divine word, or the faculty of mental vision by which we derive benefit from that external manifestation, the work is of God. He created the material sun whose light is the means of its own visibility, and of the discovery of all other objects; and he created the corporeal eye which receives and uses that light. In like manner all information respecting God, his will, ourselves, and the way of salvation, is from God. The doctrine of innate ideas is justly exploded. The involuntary instincts of our animal frame can be no inlets to the knowledge of divine truth. Sensation and self-reflection, independent of instruction, can furnish us with no knowledge of spiritual objects*. Philosophy leaves us in the dark. For some thousand years God suffered its disciples to make a trial of its powers. The result is fully satisfactory. Instead of eliciting new light on divine subjects, they extinguished

* On this subject see Ellis's "Knowledge of divine things "from revelation, not from reason or nature."

that which tradition from the original revelation afforded them. "Professing themselves to be "wise, they became fools, and changed the glory "of the incorruptible God into an image made "like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-"footed beasts and creeping things." Rom. i. 22, 23. And the effects which philosophy produced on their morals corresponded with the darkness which it brought on their minds, as appears by the awful detail which follows the verses we have cited.

God hath now, by the word of his grace, dispersed the dark cloud which covered all spiritual subjects. He hath revealed in the Scriptures "the things which belong to our peace." He hath "brought life and immortality to light by "the Gospel." But without the faculty of vision of what use is light? Multitudes who have the Bible in their hands continue in error. They grope in darkness at noon-day. They neither discern the way of salvation, nor the path of duty. They are "alienated from the life of God "through the ignorance that is in them, because "of the blindness of their heart."

The Christian believer is made sensible both of the objective and subjective darkness in which the way of salvation is involved independent of divine mercy. He therefore thanks God for the Bible which removes the one, and for the "unc-"tion from the Holy One" which removes the other. The Bible is a divine *remedy* made effectual by a divine *blessing*. That he has the Scriptures in his hand is a great blessing; but that his understanding is opened to understand them is another of equal importance. He discerns the necessity of both to the salvation of his soul, and acknowledges God to be the Author of

both. And being conscious that as yet his mental eye-sight is in a diseased and imperfect state, he prays for more distinctness of vision.

Bishop Davenant, speaking in his exposition of the epistle to the Colossians of the revelation which God makes to his saints of the mystery of Christ, (chap. i. ver. 26,) says, "A two-fold reason may be assigned for the necessity of this divine revelation—partly on account of the things revealed, and partly on account of the human intellect. The things revealed, *viz.* the mysteries of our salvation in Christ, are supernatural, and depend on the mere will and dispensation of God. The incarnation of God, the expiation of sin by his death, gratuitous salvation by faith in his mediation, are all things of such a nature as could never have entered into the human mind, unless God had revealed his design of saving mankind by such means; for they depend on the most free volition of God, without any connexion of natural causes.

"As to the human understanding it is so obscured by the darkness of sin, that it is not merely dim-sighted, but it is totally blind. 'The natural man perceives not the things 'which be of God.' 1 Cor. ii. 14. There is, therefore, a necessity of a divine revelation. Excellently St. Augustine speaks, Hypog. iii. 'Let no one boast that he hath begotten faith 'by his own reason; let him acknowledge in 'himself that the faith which is, in Christ 'Jesus, as well before the law, as under the 'law, and after the law, is savingly revealed 'to every one by the illumination of grace 'which is from God the Father.' For 'the eye 'of the soul (as Gerson rightly observes) is 'become turbid, being totally stained with

" 'sensuality, enveloped with a cloud in its " 'inferior reason, and blinded in its superior.' " To sum up all. The mystery of the Gospel is " above nature. It depends on the eternal and " secret counsel of God. The human mind, is, " through sin, degraded beneath its own nature. " Its eye is stained, over-clouded, and become " totally blind. Therefore this mystery could " never have been perceived by us without the " benefit of a divine revelation."

All men are naturally " in error." How can it be otherwise, since all are naturally blind! A blind man, placed in a wilderness without a guide, must, of necessity, wander about, not knowing whither he goeth. " We have all erred and " strayed from God's ways like lost sheep," as our own confessions testify. Of this there is no doubt. The grand question is, Are we restored to the way of righteousness? There are two spirits mentioned by St. John, (1 Eph. iv. 6,) as ruling and governing the whole world, " the " spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." By which of these are we led? If we have been brought back to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, and are now led by his Spirit, the glory is due to God, while we are made conscious of the happy change which we have experienced—a change of sentiments, of heart, and of life.

" The light of God's truth" is the revelation which he hath made in his word. Once we " wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way, " and found no city to dwell in. Hungry and " thirsty, our souls fainted in us." We " walked " in darkness and had no light." But the word of God is now " a light to our feet and a lamp " to our paths." The sun of righteousness hath arisen upon us. And if our eyes have been

anointed with that eye-salve which the great Physician prescribes and applies, we benefit by his rays. We discern the tremendous dangers which we have escaped during the darkness in which we before travelled. We discover the perils with which our path is still encompassed so as to shun them. The track which we are to follow is evident to our view, and the object at which we are to aim is in sight. "The light of God's truth," the information which is communicated in the Scriptures and received by faith, is such as may be fully depended on. It is "a faithful saying "and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus "came into the world to save sinners." The light of Scripture is not an *ignis fatuus*, which, like the supposed revelations of enthusiastic minds, will allure and disappoint. But it is a solid, steady, uniform light, which guides the feet of those who make use of it in the paths of peace to the realms of bliss.

That act of divine mercy which is described in our collect, then, is of a two-fold nature, as we have already observed. There is a two-fold manifestation of light which God graciously vouchsafes to his people; one in his word, the other in the human mind. The light diffused by the word, like that of the material sun, is designed for our use and fully adapted to its end. But as the material light is of use to those only who have the faculty of sight, so also the word of God can produce no saving effects on any persons but those only who have that "faith" which is "of "the operation of God." God "shews to them "that be in error the light of his truth," by removing the film which sin has spread over the eye of the mind. He "opens the understanding "to understand the Scriptures." The eye is the

lamp of the whole body. Therefore, on the one hand, if the eye be clear, and free from any vitiating humour, the whole body will be full of light, enjoying the advantage of the solar beams; but, on the other hand, if the eye be distempered, the whole body will be full of darkness, notwithstanding the sun shines with meridian brightness.

The end for which "God shews to them that "be in error the light of his truth" is their salvation. It is "to the intent that they may "return into the way of righteousness." "The "way of righteousness" is "the right way that "leads to the city of habitation." Christ is the way of faith and holiness—of righteousness both imputed and imparted—of justification and sanctification. A reliance on Christ for pardon and acceptance, and universal obedience to the will of God, conjointly form the way in which we must walk, as it is pointed out to us by the light of God's truth, in order that we may attain to the salvation of our souls. These cannot be disunited from each other. Faith and love are correlatives; they have a reciprocal relation, so that the existence of one depends on the existence of the other.

O merciful intent of divine goodness! May "Almighty God" who alone can do it "shew" both to the writer and reader of these pages "the "light of his truth, so that we may return into "the way of righteousness!" May he convert our souls, and lead us in "the paths of righ-"teousness for his name's sake." May he "turn "us from darkness to light"—from error to truth—from the law to Christ—from sin to holiness—from the devil, the world, and the flesh, to God—from the confines of hell to the threshold of heaven.

We are not to suppose from the language of our collect that God merely points out "the way "of righteousness," and then leaves the sinner to his own depraved will. No; he "worketh "in us both to will and to do of his own good "pleasure." The bias of our will is naturally to the way of error and death. And notwithstanding any discovery made to the understanding, that way we should pursue, were not the illumination of the mind accompanied with conversion of heart. God effectually inclines his people to obedience while he clearly manifests his will to them. They are not constrained to act against their will; but they are made "willing" to do that which is right "in the day of "his power."

The petition of our collect implores further grace, in addition to that which we have already received, and which has been before described, in order that our conversation may be conformed to our profession. We pray for ourselves and for all who are "admitted into the fellowship of "Christ's religion, that we may eschew those "things that are contrary to our profession, and "follow all such things as are agreeable to the "same, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This petition is founded on the foregoing preface; for in the latter an acknowledgment is made of divine goodness in our conversion. But are we indeed turned from the error of our ways? This is a most important inquiry, since our petition is confined to those who are so turned. By them only can it be with propriety used, for none else know what is contrary or agreeable to a profession of Christianity—None else can feel any desire to "adorn the doctrine of God our "Saviour"—None else are under the influence

of those motives which are essential to a holy walk and conversation.

The persons then for whom grace is implored in our collect are those who are "admitted into "the fellowship of Christ's religion;" that is, those who are truly converted to God. Now the religion of Christ is a system of privileges and duties. The word *religion* signifies obligation*. It consists of faith and practice—of obligations arising from privileges freely bestowed, which are commensurate with all the capacities of which its votaries are possessed, and binding them to duties which are commensurate with all their powers. The influence of privilege and duty in Christ's religion is mutual. Its privileges cannot be enjoyed without producing obedience, nor can its duties be practised without an enjoyment of its privileges. But though these are cotemporary, yet an enjoyment of the privileges of Christianity, in the order of causes and effects, takes the precedence. For "faith worketh by love."

"The fellowship of Christ's religion" is a participation of its privileges, a joint interest in its blessings. Fellowship is partnership. But with whom is this fellowship formed? "Truly our "fellowship is with the Father and with his Son "Jesus Christ." Believers participate in all the blessings of the Father's love and of the Son's redemption. "All things are theirs, for they "are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "The "fellowship of the Holy Ghost" is also with them, for they partake of his consolations. There is a joint interest also between all the members of Christ's holy Catholic church, who-

* See p. 14 of this volume.

ther saints made perfect or militant believers. "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, "one God and Father of all, who is above all, "and through all, and in them all." *Their* participation of covenant-mercy is that of senior partners: *ours* that of juniors. But "we are all "one in Christ Jesus."

Admission into that fellowship of which our collect speaks takes place at conversion. The participation of the benefits resulting from redemption which the saints enjoy, is enjoyed through faith in Christ. All believers are "admitted" into it, and none besides them.

The petition which we offer is two-fold. We pray that all those who "are admitted into the "fellowship of Christ's religion may eschew," or shun, "those things which are contrary to their "profession, and follow all such things as are "agreeable to the same;" or, in other words, that they may "put off the old man which is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and "put on the new man which after God is "created in righteousness and true holiness."

It will be impossible for us to enumerate all the things which it is our duty and privilege to shun, or those which it becomes us to follow. And as it is impossible, so also it is needless. For the rule by which our conduct is to be regulated will sufficiently instruct all those who attend to it.

What then is that rule? It is "our pro-"fession." Now, what do we profess to be? We profess to be "not our own but bought "with a price," and therefore bound to "glorify "God with our bodies and spirits which are "his." We profess to be partakers of the spirit of Christ, and imitators of his example. We

are by profession "pilgrims and strangers upon "earth," and citizens of the new Jerusalem. In short, we call ourselves Christians; and we have been, on our reception into the congregation of Christ's flock, "signed with the sign of "the cross, in token that thereafter we should "not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ "crucified, and manfully to fight under his ban-"ner against the devil, the world, and the flesh, "and to continue his faithful soldiers and ser-"vants unto our lives' end."

We profess then that we are "very members "incorporate in the mystical body of the Son of "God, which is the blessed company of all "faithful people; and are also heirs through "hope of his everlasting kingdom, by the merits "of his most precious death and passion." And as such we "humbly beseech our heavenly "Father so to assist us with his grace, that we "may continue in that holy fellowship, and do "all such good works as he hath prepared for "us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Respecting every act which we are about to perform, it becomes us to ask, Is this consistent with my holy profession? Will it afford evidence of my gratitude and love to him, who hath shewed me "the light of his truth," and restored me to "the way of righteousness?" Will it correspond with the character I sustain and the name I bear? Will it afford me pleasure in the retrospect of a death-bed and the judgment-day? How many things should we eschew which we now commit, and how many things should we follow from which we now abstain, were these questions always uppermost in our minds!

The propriety of praying for grace that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in

all things, will not be disputed by any of those who are truly admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion. For they all feel and acknowledge that there is much remaining inconsistency between their sensibilities and their privileges, between their profession and their conduct. To walk "worthy of God" is, however, their ardent desire and constant aim. To "shew forth "the praises of him who hath called them out "of darkness into his marvellous light," is their highest ambition. They will therefore join earnestly in this collect of our church, and continue to use it, till the soiled robe of their profession on earth be changed for that white robe which is prepared for them, and which will be "with-"out spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; Grant unto thy people that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"THE world passeth away, and the lust there-
"of: but he that doeth the will of God abideth
"for ever." Such was the language which the beloved disciple held, when he addressed the members of the Christian church in his day, for the purpose of arming them against all inordinate affection to the world and the things thereof. And surely, if such considerations were necessary to be suggested then, when Christianity was in its full vigour under the fostering hands of the Apostles, and during the first abundant effusion of the Spirit—when persecution raged—and when the disciple of Jesus was daily exposed to martyrdom; they cannot be unnecessary to be repeated now in these dregs of time, when the church of Christ has lost its primitive purity and energy—when outward peace, security, and prosperity have, as it were, clipped the wings of devotion—and when the love of many waxeth cold. It is certain that every professor, who is

unconscious of the ensnaring power of the world, and of a criminal attachment to it in his own bosom, is destitute of self-knowledge, and is not of those who are fighting manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil. For the cure of this moral distemper, the worldliness of the human heart, serious reflection on the empty and transitory nature of the world itself, and of our inclinations after it, is prescribed by the Apostle whose words we have quoted. The world itself, this beautiful frame of nature, and all possibility of deriving gratification from it, will soon cease for ever; and then all those who have set their hearts upon it, and made it their portion, will perish with it. Then the sensualist, the voluptuary, the glutton, the drunkard, and the covetous, feeling wants which will never be relieved, desires which will never be accomplished, and pains which will never be allayed, will experience in the agonies of regret, disappointment, and despair, the torture which is occasioned by "the "worm that never dieth." But the believer in Jesus who "doeth the will of God," who is habitually "crucified to the world, and to whom "the world is crucified," who lives in a course of humble obedience to the will of God through faith which worketh by love, "shall live for "ever." He shall abide in a state of grace throughout this mortal life, and after it shall be advanced to a state of eternal glory.

But the way of man is not in himself: "it is "not in man that walketh to direct his steps." To regulate the state of our own hearts, and the course of our own lives, is out of our power. The world is our natural element, so that a change of nature is necessary to qualify us for quitting it and living in another. Like the eel,

we grovel in the mud, unable to rise to the surface and soar above it, till we are made "new "creatures in Christ Jesus." "By prayer there- "fore and supplication" our requests, on this subject, as well as on every other, must "be "made known to God." And this we do in a concise and appropriate form of sound words prepared for our use on this day.

Our collect for the fourth Sunday after Easter contains—an introduction—a petition—and the end for which that petition is offered.

The introduction ascribes glory to divine Omnipotence, by a declaration of our belief that God can perform that which is beyond the reach of all finite power—that which is more difficult than the government of the stormy wind and tempest, or of the raging ocean—more difficult than the reduction of the chaotic mass in which the atoms of the heavens and the earth first appeared to that order and beauty in which they now subsist. "God," and God "alone," by his "almighty" power, can "order the unruly wills "and affections of sinful men."

It is to be observed that in this prayer we are speaking of ourselves; for ourselves supplication is here made, as appears by the pronoun "our" in the concluding part of the collect, though we are taught to speak in the third person for the charitable purpose of including in our request all the members of the Christian church. We then are the "sinful men" and women, whose "unruly wills and affections" require Omnipotence to control and govern them. Each of us may say, "I am a *sinful* man, O Lord." But are we conscious that we are "full of sin," and that "in us, that is in our flesh," in our whole constitution, independently of renewing grace,

"dwelleth no good thing?" If not, we shall not feel any necessity for this act of supplication, nor be able cordially to unite in it. Our church-service is adapted to the use of conscious sinners and of none else. Indeed no forms of prayer or praise, no religious worship can be adapted to any other persons here on earth.

The faculties of the human soul are usually stated to be three-fold—the understanding, the will, and the affections. The two latter of these are mentioned in our collect, and the former is implied. For the will cannot be regulated, nor the affections directed into their proper channel, without a previous illumination of the understanding. The understanding being the directive faculty, the will and the affections depend on its decisions.

The will, instructed by the understanding, is the regent of the affections. It is the power of choosing or rejecting whatever is proposed to it by the understanding. In a perversion of the will consists the essence of our fall; for, misled by the ignorance of the mind, it invariably chooses what God hates, and delights in that which he abhors; and it detests and rejects all that he approves. Conversion also, which repairs the injury that we have received by the fall, has a principal relation to the will; for it restores the elective faculty to its proper office, and gives to it its primeval tendency.

The "affections" or passions of the soul are the servants of the understanding and will. Our desires and aversions, our love and hatred, our joy and sorrow, our hope and fear, are governed by the superior powers of the mind. For according to the representations of the intellectual,

and the bias of the elective faculty, the passions are excited to action.

Now it is acknowledged in our collect that our "wills and affections" are in an "unruly" state; and the truth of the acknowledgment is sanctioned and established by the word of God. For "the carnal mind is enmity against God; "it is not subject to the law of God, neither "indeed can be." And even after conversion has taken place, our "wills and affections" are still turbulent and tumultuous as the winds and waves, so that he only who "gathereth the "wind in his fists," and who said authoritatively to the sea, "Peace, be still," can manage them. That our wills and affections are not entirely under the regulation of the divine law, is a confession in which all may properly join. For though all "God's people" "love the law of "God after the inner man," yet they all "find "another law in their members." In them all "the flesh" still "lusteth against the Spirit, so "that they cannot do the things that they "would." Conversion is a gradual work which God carries on in the hearts of his people, till, at length, their will is lost in the divine will, and their affections flow, invariably and with a full tide, to him as their point of attraction. During the present state, however, even those who are "turned from darkness to light and "from the power of Satan unto God," may truly concur in the humiliating confession, that "God alone can govern their unruly wills and "affections." Let the restraint of his power be suspended, and they "start aside like a broken "bow." Let the slightest temptation assault them, and the tendency of the needle to its due

point of attraction is disturbed. The stream of their affections, though restored to its proper channel, is either languid in its course, or ready to overflow its banks, or in danger of being diverted to a devious course.

Now "God's people" know by painful experience, that he "alone can order their unruly "wills and affections." For they discern that conversion and sanctification are exclusively his work, in their rise, their progress, and completion. It may be asked, how doth God perform his work of "ordering the unruly wills and "affections of sinful men?" Doth he destroy the freedom of the will, and put a force on the affections? No; the will must be free, the elective faculty cannot be compelled. But he "orders the unruly wills and affections of sinful "men" in their natural state by his providential government of the world, often restraining them from "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the "mind" by "hedging up their way with thorns." And he enlightens the understandings of his people, and thereby converts the bias of their wills. He exhibits to their view the danger and folly of sin, the vanity of the world, and, above all, the love of Christ; and hereby the important change is begun, carried on, and perfected. He "draws them with the cords of a man, and with "bands of love," working on those rational powers with which he has endued them, until reason again becomes, what it was originally designed to be, the vicegerent and obedient servant of the King of kings.

We proceed now to consider the supplicatory part of our collect which is founded on the foregoing introduction. We lift up our hearts to

God as his people, and implore grace for a two-fold purpose.

First, that we may love the thing which he commandeth. The law of God which contains his commands is "holy, just, and good," and every precept thereof is calculated to promote the glory of God and the happiness of man, proportionably to the extent in which it is obeyed. The path of duty therefore is the path "of plea-" santness and peace." If nothing could be said in favour of submission to the will of God respecting present advantages accruing from it, yet the prospect of eternity would demonstrate the wisdom of cultivating a spirit of godliness. But it is certain that piety is as preferable to its opposite, even with respect to present comfort, as the heaven is higher than the earth. For of what doth a humble submission to the will of God deprive us? Of nothing but what is conducive to misery. It is a deliverance from evil and tormenting passions; it is the enjoyment of divine and heavenly dispositions. The grand source of the misery which we feel is the disorder and turbulence of our passions. The human heart, in its natural state, may be fitly compared to a kingdom in which confusion and dissension predominate. If we imagine to ourselves a society which is the seat of civil war, and overrun by an invading and merciless foe, in which all law and restraint are abolished, the subjects in arms against their rightful sovereign, a thousand upstart tyrants gratifying themselves at the expense of every thing that is right and just and good, property and tranquillity lost and destroyed, and life constantly in danger,—in such an imaginary scene of woe, we have a just picture of

the state of man, while his unruly will and affections bear the sway in an unconverted state. Holiness is happiness, and sin misery: love and obedience constitute the antepast of heaven; disobedience is the foretaste of hell. The very idea of a deviation from what God commands would savour of the bottomless pit, were not our minds blinded and corrupted. It would be hell to an angel or to a saint made perfect.

In our natural state we abhor what God commands, and love what he prohibits. "The "carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not "subject to the law of God, neither indeed can "be." While this enmity remains, there can be no friendship nor intercourse between God and us; for "how can two walk together except they "be agreed" in the objects of their love and aversion? Oh, let us examine ourselves by God's commands, viewing them in their spirituality, their reference to the heart as well as to the life; and inquire whether we do cordially consent to them. Vain is our hope of happiness, either here or hereafter, unless our inclinations be in unison with God's commandments.

Even in a converted state of soul in which our collect supposes us to be, (and O that the supposition may be founded in truth, both as to the writer and every reader or hearer of these pages!) even in a converted state we have still need to pray for grace that we may "love the thing "which God commandeth." It is not the reluctant obedience of a slave that is acceptable to God, but the cheerful compliance which love produces in the bosom of an affectionate child. The Christian believer, alas! still finds a considerable reluctance to that entire submission which is required to God's commandments. He

"loves" indeed "the law of God after the "inner man; but he finds another law in his "members warring against the law of his mind." Though a divorce has taken place between the believer's will and sin, so that "it is no more he "that doth it, but sin that dwelleth in him;" though "the law in the members" is opposed by the renewed will, and maintains its sway only in the inferior powers of the soul, and not in the will and understanding; yet still it is a law of disturbance though not of obedience. It keeps possession of its residence as an enemy, though it is discarded as a friend. It retards the obedience of the soul, though it is no longer productive of habitual and allowed disobedience. Let the Christian reader say if this be not a mournful truth. Does an angel or a saint made perfect feel as we do respecting God's commandments? O where is the alacrity of delight in the path of duty—where is the swift motion of the soul, which love is calculated to produce, in running the way of God's commandments?

We have need therefore to pray for grace that we may "love the thing which God command-"eth;" that the requisitions of our heavenly Father, though they should extend to the amputation of a right hand or foot, or to the excision of a right eye, may cheerfully be submitted to under a conviction that the will of God is our salvation. Lord, "draw me, and I shall run "after thee!"

We, moreover, implore grace "that we may "desire that which God doth promise." His promises are "exceedingly great and precious." There is nothing which we can want either for time or eternity, which God has not promised

to bestow on his people. These immensely great promises are "exceedingly precious," not only on account of the intrinsic value of the things which are promised, (though that surpasses the human understanding,) but also on account of the source from which they are derived. They are spontaneous streams of divine mercy. They flow to us through the channel of our Redeemer's death on the cross. "For all "the promises in him are yea and in him amen, "to the glory of God." Whatever infinite love could suggest, infinite wisdom contrive, infinite power execute, infinite merit procure—whatever we are capable of receiving, or God is able to bestow, through a series of eternal ages; all this is provided in the covenant of grace. It is all secured by the faithful promises of an unchangeable God.

In our natural state we feel no desires after those spiritual blessings which God has promised to bestow on those who diligently seek him. Pardoning and sanctifying grace, communion with God, and even heaven itself, are considered by the unrenewed mind either as things unnecessary, and are therefore treated with indifference, or else as evils, and therefore are treated with aversion. A diseased stomach feels a nausea excited by the sight of the most wholesome and delicious viands. The body when in a fever is restless on the softest bed of down.

And though as converted persons we may have experienced some desires after promised blessings, yet how faint they are! How weak is our faith in the truth of the promises! And how languid is our expectation of their fulfilment! Oh! how feeble are our endeavours to lay hold of them! How slow is our pace in the pursuit

of the objects which they exhibit to our view! Do we not live on from day to day contented in the absence of what God has promised to bestow on his people here? And where is that earnest stretching forth of the neck * in eager longing after heavenly joys? How little of that hunger and thirst after God of which the Scriptures speak, do we feel and manifest! Surely we have need to pray for grace, that we may desire what God hath promised; for the present torpor of our souls is a disgraceful reflection on divine munificence.

The end for which we implore sanctifying grace is very important, *viz.* "that among the "sundry and manifold changes of the world our "hearts may surely there be fixed where true "joys are to be found." This happiness can only be attained in proportion as we are enabled to "love the thing which God commandeth, and "to desire that which he doth promise." For without a spiritualized frame of mind we are "like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose "waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no "peace, saith my God, to the wicked;" and such are all those who love not God's commandments, and whose affections are not "set on things "above."

"The world passeth away and the things "thereof"—most affecting and alarming truth to those who make the world their portion! Their portion is a bubble; for like a vesicle inflated with air, however gay and alluring it may appear to the eye, it will soon burst and disappoint all their expectations. In the vast deserts of Asia and Africa, the light sand of

* Αποκαραδοκια. Rom. viii. 19; Phil. i. 20.

which they are composed is frequently so affected with whirlwinds, that new mountains are raised, and new vallies sunk, and the whole face of nature entirely changed in a very short period. In this wild uproar of elements, in which earth and heaven are intermingled and confounded, whole caravans of merchants or of pilgrims often perish in an instant. This scene affords a fit emblem of "the sundry and manifold changes "of the world." Earthly friends, fortune, health, and life, are things transitory and perishing. To fix our hearts on any sublunary good is to build for happiness on a quicksand or on a wave of the sea.

Surely it is the part of wisdom to withdraw our affections from every thing which is thus perishable and uncertain, and to grasp that which is permanent and durable, if there be any such thing to be found. Does not the shipwrecked mariner gladly quit the billow for the rock? That man is to be pitied with the deepest commiseration who is looking for peace and comfort to the creature. He is like the idiotish rustic of the heathen poet, who is represented as waiting on the bank of a river till its waters are run by, in order that he may pass to the other side*. His hopes are sure to be disappointed. His imaginary paradise of worldly pleasure and contentment is not attainable. Like the fog bank which excites the joy and kindles the hopes of the weary voyager, it both flatters and deceives.

But is there any thing amidst the devastations of the hurricane and the earthquake which is

* Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.
Hor.

certain and unperishable, to which our attention is called? Yes, blessed be God, there is. There is "a good part which can never be taken away "from us." There is a rock, which will stand unshaken when "the earth is removed and the "mountains are carried into the midst of the "sea." The believer's portion will be uninjured "when the heavens shall pass away with a great "noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent "heat, when the earth and all the works that "are therein shall be burned up." In the favour of God, in communion with him, and in obedience to his will, "true joys are to be found"—joys which are not, like those of the world, mingled with sorrow, disturbed by fear, and short-lived as the crackling of blazing thorns;—but solid, permanent, durable, unmixed, and ever improving. Of these joys the Christian believer experiences a foretaste here below, while, through grace, he is enabled to "love the thing which "God commandeth, and to desire that which "he doth promise." Even here he is indulged with an occasional taste of Eshcol's grapes, whereby the flavour of the fruits of Canaan is ascertained. He has the earnest of the Spirit in his heart, the first-fruits of a future harvest in reversion. What he here enjoys is, however, but a foretaste. "In God's presence there is "fulness of joy, and at his right hand are plea-"sures for evermore."

O let us cordially join in imploring grace, that we may "love what God commands, and desire "what he promises," to the end "that our "hearts may surely there be fixed where true "joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our "Lord!" For then we shall be out of the reach of the storm, and we shall be no more affected by

" the sundry and manifold changes of the world," than the rocky shore by the tumult of the sea which rages at its base. Throughout life and in death we shall have support and consolation which the world cannot give nor take away; and, after death, shall experience the consummation of all our wishes*. Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen.

* Let the Christian finish this meditation by reading Psal. xc.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

O Lord, from whom all good things do come; grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

It is the doctrine of the Scriptures that "every "good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, "and cometh down from the Father of lights, "with whom is no variableness nor shadow of "turning." And this assertion is interwoven with all the forms of our church, whether devotional or doctrinal. Like a golden thread it runs through our whole liturgy, articles and homilies, and both beautifies and enriches them.

The corruption of the human heart is too deep and wide to be explored by a finite capacity. God only knows its height and depth, its length and breadth. "The heart is deceitful above all "things, and desperately wicked; who can know "it?" Among other proofs of its depravity, its self-righteousness is prominent. It remains even after conversion. The fabric is then indeed sapped, but it is not entirely demolished. Our proneness to hide or extenuate our guilt is a fruit of this noxious weed. We are the fallen children of him who foolishly attempted to hide himself from God among the trees of Paradise. We try, like him, to transfer the guilt of our nature and practice from ourselves to something else, and

even impiously ascribe it to God rather than take it entirely to ourselves. Blasphemy is one of those evils which proceed naturally from the heart of man. (Matt. vii. 22.)

It has been supposed that St. James, from whom we have cited the above passage on which the introduction of our collect appears to be founded, perceived some symptoms of this spirit among the members of the primitive church to whom he wrote, and that this occasioned his caution in ver. 13,—"Let no man say when he "is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God can- "not be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he "any man: But every man is tempted, when he is "drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; "and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth "death." The cause of all our evil thoughts and evil works is connatural to us—it is in ourselves. The Apostle adds, for the vindication of the divine character, and for the purpose of leading the mind to just views of God, "Do not err, my "beloved brethren. Every good gift, and every "perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down "from the Father of lights, with whom is no "variableness, nor shadow of turning." Nothing but good, pure and unmixed good, proceeds from God; and from him all good of every kind constantly flows in a copious and uninterrupted stream. For as from the sun in the firmament, which the heathens have called "the Father of "lights," all good in the natural world is derived as its secondary cause; so all good, both natural and spiritual, is derived primarily from God. The material sun is however variable in its effects. No sooner doth it reach its meridian height than it begins to descend towards the west: the year

no sooner attains its summer's heat, than it begins to verge towards winter again. But God is "the "same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." "With "him is no variableness nor shadow of turning," his grace and power are inexhaustible and eternal.

On these truths our present collect is founded. It contains—a preface, ascribing all good to God; —and a prayer for sanctifying inspiration from him.

"All good things come from God." Creation and Providence are both exclusively his works. With respect to the former, he looked thereon when he had finished it, and "behold it was "very good," exactly conformed to the model of his own wisdom and goodness. And with respect to the latter, though "clouds and dark-"ness are round about him, yet righteousness "and judgment are the habitation of his throne." "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy "in all his works." When the mysteries of divine Providence are unravelled and disclosed to view, as they probably will be when the coil is all unwound, divine wisdom, goodness, holiness, and righteousness, will be apparent in all its dispensations. It will be then evident that "the "Lord is good, and doth good."

All our natural powers and providential supplies come from God. We have nothing that we have not received from him. "In him we live, "and move, and have our being." He "made "us and not we ourselves." He "upholdeth our "souls in life." He causeth the sun to shine, and the rain to descend. He "crowneth us with "loving kindness and tender mercies." He "satisfieth our mouths with good things."

But our collect relates more particularly to spiritual blessings, as appears from the prayer

which follows this ascription of all good to God. Man is by nature "dead in trespasses and sins;" and it is the power of God which kindles in his bosom the first spark of spiritual life; he cherishes the life which he imparts; and through every stage of its progress it is dependent on him for its existence and increase. Every good desire is the gift of God, and the power to perform the good desires which are thus suggested is also from him. St. Paul, in his own name and in the name of all his brethren, disavows all self-sufficiency. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to *think* "any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is "of God." (2 Cor. iii. 5; Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 10.) And in another place he tells us that it is "God "who worketh in us both to *will* and to *do* of "his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 13. Man in himself is a mere mass of sin and corruption; so that all good must be extrinsical and from above, both meritoriously and potentially. Man can neither merit nor produce it in himself. With the representations of Scripture on this subject our church fully corresponds. In her liturgy she teaches us to acknowledge, that "all holy desires, good "counsels, and just works, proceed from God." In her articles she asserts that "the condition of "man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he "cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own "natural strength and good works, to faith and "calling upon God. Wherefore we have no "power to do good works pleasant and accepta-"ble to God, without the grace of God by Christ "preventing us that we may have a good will, "and working with us when we have that good "will." Man "cannot repent; he cannot be-"lieve; he cannot turn to God; nay, he cannot "so much as prepare himself for it; and why

" can he not, but because he will not? And cer-
" tainly if he will not, he cannot; it being
" impossible he should act any thing contrary to
" his will: and therefore if he cannot will it, he
" cannot do it*." To the testimony of the arti-cles we might add that of the homilies, and shew, by copious extracts, if it were necessary, that salvation is altogether of grace. One pas-sage, from the first part of the sermon for Roga-tion week, containing a sweet commentary on the declaration of our collect that " all good things
" do come from God," we shall subjoin.

" It is his goodness that moveth him to say
" in Scripture, It is my delight to be with the
" children of men. It is his goodness that
" moveth him to call us unto him, to offer us his
" friendship and presence. It is his goodness
" that patiently suffereth our straying from him,
" and suffereth us long, to win us to repentance.
" It is of his goodness that we be created reason-
" able creatures, where else he might have made
" us brute beasts. It was his mercy to have us
" born among the number of Christian people,
" and thereby in a much more nighness to salva-
" tion than where we might have been born, if
" his goodness had not been, among the Paynims
" *(heathens)*, clean void from God, and the
" hope of everlasting life. And what other thing
" doth his loving and gentle voice, spoken in
" his word where he calleth us to his presence
" and friendship, but declare his goodness only
" without regard of our worthiness? And what
" other thing doth stir him to call us to him

* See Bishop Beveridge, on Article x. where the reader will find many quotations from the primitive fathers and councils in support of the doctrine of our church.

" when we be strayed from him, to suffer us
" patiently, to win us to repentance, but only
" his singular goodness, no whit of our deserving?
" Let them all come together that be now glori-
" fied in heaven, and let us hear what answer
" they will make in these points before rehearsed,
" whether their first creation was in God's good-
" ness or of themselves? Forsooth David would
" make answer for them all and say, Know ye for
" surety even the Lord is God, he hath made us
" and not we ourselves. If they were asked again,
" who should be thanked for their regeneration,
" for their justification, and for their salvation,
" whether their deserts or God's goodness only?
" Although in this point every one confess suffi-
" ciently the truth of this matter in his own
" person; yet let David answer by the mouth of
" them all at this time, who cannot chuse but say,
" Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name
" give the thank for thy loving mercy and for
" thy truth sake. If we should ask again, from
" whence came their glorious works and deeds,
" which they wrought in their lives, wherewith
" God was so highly pleased and worshipped by
" them? Let some other witness be brought in
" to testify this matter, that in the mouth of two
" or three may the truth be known."

" Verily that holy prophet Esay beareth record
" and saith, O Lord, it is thou of thy goodness
" that hast wrought all our works in us, not we
" ourselves. And to uphold the truth of this
" matter against all justiciaries and hypocrites
" which rob Almighty God of his honour and
" ascribe it to themselves, St. Paul bringeth in his
" belief. We be not (saith he) sufficient of our-
" selves, once to think any thing, but all our
" ableness is of God's goodness; for he it is in

"whom we have all our being, our living, and "moving. If ye will know, furthermore, where "they had all their gifts and sacrifices, which they "offered continually in their lives to Almighty "God, they cannot but agree with David where "he saith, Of thy liberal hand, O Lord, have "we received that we gave unto thee. If this "holy company therefore confess so constantly "that all the good and graces wherewith they "were endued in soul came of the goodness of "God only, What more can be said to prove that "all that is good cometh from Almighty God? "Is it meet to think that all spiritual goodness "cometh from God above only, and that other "good things, either of nature or of fortune (as "we call them) cometh of any other cause? Doth "God of his goodness adorn the soul with all the "powers thereof as it is; and cometh the gifts of "the body (wherewith it is endued) from any "other? If he doth the more, cannot he do the "less? To justify a sinner, to new create him "from a wicked person to a righteous man, is a "greater act (saith Augustin) than to make such "a new heaven and earth as is already made. "We must needs agree that whatsoever good "thing is in us, of grace, of nature, or of for-"tune, is of God only, as the only Author and "Worker."

How great then is the folly, the pride and the guilt of man in arrogating to himself any praise from aught which he possesses, or supposes himself to possess! Its absurdity is gross; its pride is abominable; and its guilt must be very heavy. As well might the earth claim the honour of its own fertility independent of the sun and rain—a claim which the first wintry night that occurred would prove to be preposterous. A perpetual

and everlasting winter must reign throughout the human soul without divine grace. Every believer will say, therefore, with the Apostle, "By the "grace of God I am what I am."

We proceed to consider the prayer of our collect, in which we beseech God to "grant, that "by his holy inspiration we may think those "things that be good, and by his merciful guid- "ing may perform the same, through our Lord "Jesus Christ." Two things are here implored; that "the grace of God by Christ may prevent us "that we may have a good will, and that it may "work with us when we have that good will."

Every truly converted person earnestly desires to have his thoughts occupied, only and always, in that which is good. Upon a supposition that this is the desire of our hearts, this collect is prepared for our use. But is it indeed so? Are evil thoughts our plague and burden? and is it our fervent wish to have them banished wholly from our hearts, and their place supplied with godly motions? If not, our connexion with the church is merely nominal, for we cannot join in her services, nor adopt her language.

Those thoughts only are good which have the glory of God, either directly or indirectly, for their object, aim, and end. For what, it may be asked, is the end of our being? In what consists the happiness of our nature? What is the aim of the Gospel of Christ? What is the employment of heaven? And what is the state of those who are in the presence of God?

Now the unconverted heart is wholly destitute of good thoughts and tenanted by bad ones. For "God is not in all the thoughts of the "wicked." Psal. x. 4. "He wants no Prophet "to teach him, no priest to atone for him, no

"King to conduct him: he needs neither a "Christ to redeem, nor a Spirit to sanctify "him; he believes no Providence, adores no "Creator, and fears no Judge*." Well therefore may it be said, that "every imagination "of the thoughts of his heart is only evil and "that continually"—an awful description of the human heart, with which the declaration of our Lord agrees, when he asserts that "out of the "heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, "fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." These are the impure and bitter waters which flow naturally from the fountain of the human heart.

Even after conversion the fountain of our thoughts is but partially cleansed. For oh, what worldly, filthy, and profane thoughts harrass and grieve the believing soul! If the thoughts of a single day were delineated on paper, with what disgust would the Christian eye be turned from them! how would they nauseate his very soul! In our acts of prayer and praise, in our public ordinances, our social and private worship, O how many are the sinful thoughts which intrude on the mind! What a mixture of pride, carnal affection, and earthly mindedness, may be traced in our holiest duties, defiling our best attempts to serve God!

The true members of our church are conscious of their remaining corruption, and "groan "being burdened." But they mourn not as those who have no hope. For they are encouraged by the promises of God to expect progressive sanctification of heart, and that "he who "hath begun the good work in them will finish

* Bishop Horne on Psal. x. 4.

it to the day of Jesus Christ." With this enlivening hope they look up to him who made the human heart, and who alone "can bring a "clean thing out of an unclean;" beseeching him to cleanse their hearts from sin, and to replenish them with the Spirit of holiness, that "by his holy inspiration they may think those "things that be good." They are not content with external decency and a form of godliness. They have to do with him "to whom all hearts "be open, all desires known, and from whom no "secrets are hid." By his grace they have been taught that inward conformity to his will is essential both to present and future happiness; and therefore they beseech him to "cleanse the "thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of "his holy Spirit, that they may perfectly love "him, and worthily magnify his holy name "through Jesus Christ their Lord." Reader, doth thy heart say *Amen* to this petition?

The doctrine of divine influence is greatly ridiculed and blasphemed in this day of pretended rationality, when reason is worshipped as a goddess by others besides French atheists. The rites of her worship are very numerous and complicated, though its acts are more covert and ambiguous than those performed in the church of Notre Dame, where a strumpet was properly placed on a throne as the representative of the supposed deity. To her power is every good attributed which is received on earth, and to her guidance is man directed for the purpose of attaining everlasting life, by the modern system of Theology. Those, however, who thus deify the fallen reason of man, and join in a sneer at the doctrine of divine inspiration, ridicule both the Bible and our Prayer Book. To this doctrine,

in its fullest latitude of interpretation, no churchman can consistently object. Opposition to it would involve him in the crime of hypocrisy. For all spiritual light in the human understanding, and all true holiness in the human heart, are represented in the liturgy, articles, and homilies of the church of England, to be derived from inspiration of God. "Reason, till she has been "taught by the lively oracles of God, knows "nothing of *the spiritual life*, and the food "brought down from heaven for its support," as Bishop Horsley has well observed. And the lively oracles of God cannot afford saving instruction without, what the same able divine calls, "*the mysterious commerce of the believer's soul* "*with the divine Spirit.*"

To quote passages in proof of this obnoxious doctrine from the established formularies of our church seems to be unnecessary, because no one can be acquainted with those formularies without finding it in almost every page. It does not require to be sought for, but it presses on the eye. To the liturgy a general appeal may he made as in the hands of every churchman. In the ordination office, which is not inserted in every common Prayer Book as it is now printed, the following passage is remarkable, in which the candidates for priests' orders are thus addressed:—"Ye cannot have a mind "or will thereto of yourselves, for the will and "ability is given of God alone. Therefore ye "ought and have need to pray earnestly for the "Holy Spirit. You will continually pray to "God the Father, by the mediation of our only "Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assist-"ance of the Holy Ghost." Nor is it to be supposed, that the clergy alone need this divine

inspiration, for the laity are also addressed in the following words: — "Man's human and "worldly wisdom and science is not needful to "the understanding of Scripture, but the reve-"lation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the "true meaning into them that with humility "and diligence do seek therefore*."

Without entering further into the doctrine of our church on this important subject at present, as other opportunities will hereafter offer of recurring to it, we proceed to observe that, in addition to the prayer for the regulation of our thoughts by divine grace, we implore power from above, whereby we may be enabled to carry into effect the holy motions which divine inspiration has produced within us:—"Grant to "us thy humble servants that by thy holy inspi-"ration we may think those things that be good, "and by thy merciful guiding may perform the "same." For when "to will is present with "us, how to perform that which is good we find "not."

The necessity of being guided by divine influence in the performance of every good work, is evident to the conscious mind. Not only must we know, through the teaching of God's word and Spirit, what is good, but we must be enabled to practise it by the same blessed agency. To "the spirit of a sound mind" must be added "the spirit of love and of power."

For the purpose of shewing the wisdom and importance of this branch of our collect, it may be useful to specify some instances of duty.— God inspires your mind with the thought of offering prayer and praise. You address your-

* Homily on the reading of the Holy Scriptures,

self to the duty, the propriety of which you are thus made to discern. You bend your knees before God. But is nothing further necessary to render the duty acceptable to God and profitable to your soul? Can you, unassisted by divine grace, carry the good thought thus suggested into effect? Assuredly not; for "true "worshippers worship God in the spirit." Prayer without humble desire, and thanksgiving without gratitude, are acts unacceptable to God, and worse than unprofitable to those who engage in them.—God inspires you with a resolution of attending his public worship. You go to his house; but when you arrive there, can you, under all the advantages which our church-service affords, perform the duties therein required without his "merciful guiding?" Most undoubtedly you cannot. If abstraction from the world, a spiritual frame of mind, contrition, faith, desire, gratitude, are essential to a due performance of divine worship, the necessity of God's "merciful guiding" must be evident. His spirit must pray within you; he must warm your heart with a sense of redeeming love; he must apply the doctrines of his own word to your conscience.—You rise in the morning with a wish of spending the day that is before you to the praise and glory of God. The wish is good, and proceeds from the Author of all good. But unless he also maintain it and carry it into vigorous exercise throughout the day, your "goodness will be like a morning "cloud or the early dew." It will be dissipated by the first breeze of temptation; it will evaporate in the first worldly engagement that woocs your attention.

Let the reader inquire whether he be a

believer in the doctrine of divine inspiration to the extent in which our church maintains it. If not, he is a dissenter in principle from the church. And surely a dissenter from her principles is as much a dissenter as one who dissents from her discipline and worship.

This important doctrine was generally held by the members of our church till the time of Archbishop Laud. Under the protectorate of Cromwell, enthusiasm, in the vicious sense of the word, reared its hydra-head, and produced the most dreadful consequences both to church and state. After the Restoration, a desire of diverging as far as possible from the spirit of enthusiasm produced a general silence on this essential point in divinity, and ultimately a contempt of it. It is now not unfrequently exploded*. But there can be no genuine Christianity without a belief and experience of it. It is the life and soul of the Christian system. And it is a well known maxim, that no argument can be raised against the legitimate use of any thing from the abuse which has been made of it, or to which it is liable.

Is the reader a practical believer in the necessity of divine influence? Doth he feel his personal need of a participation thereof? Doth this conviction produce earnest prayer to God, "that by his holy inspiration he may think "those things that be good, and by his mer-"ciful guiding may perform the same, through

* See Knox's Christian Philosophy, and especially sect. iii. "On the prejudices against all divine and supernatural influence on the mind of man." In this treatise the reader will find a body of evidence from English divines, ancient and modern, on the subject of divine influence.

"our Lord Jesus Christ?" If not, let him remember, that "no man can say that Jesus is "the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;" and that "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is "none of his."

ASCENSION DAY.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind ascend thither, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

"IN the course of this long continued festival "of Pentecost, (which occupied the whole space "of fifty days between Easter and Whitsuntide) "we are to take more special notice of one par- "ticular day, before we come to Whitsunday: "that is, of the feast of our Saviour's ascension, "or assumption into heaven. The observation "of this festival was so ancient, that St. Augustin "could derive its original from no other fountain, "but either apostolical institution, or the general "agreement of the church in some plenary coun- "cil: for those things, says he, which are received "and observed over all the world, not as written "in Scripture, but as handed down to us by tra- "dition, we conceive to have been either instituted "by the Apostles themselves, or some numerous "councils whose authority is of very great use "in the church. Such are the anniversary so- "lemnities of our Saviour's passion and resur- "rection and ascension into heaven, and the "coming of the Holy Ghost from heaven. It is "certain therefore the feast of ascension was

" generally observed all over the church, long " before St. Augustin's time*."

Having followed our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ through the successive scenes of his humiliation, from the manger to the cross; and having, as it were, seen him rise triumphantly from the grave; we are now called to contemplate his glorious ascension into heaven. In the presence of chosen witnesses who might afterwards attest the fact, he went up from mount Olivet towards heaven till a cloud received him out of their sight, that he might take possession of his mediatorial throne.

The collect for Ascension day consists of an introduction and a prayer. The introduction recites the important fact which we profess to believe. And in the prayer which is founded thereon, we implore grace that we may be enabled to imitate the example which that fact furnishes.

The fact which we now celebrate may be stated in a few words. Our Lord Jesus Christ, after that he had finished the work which was given him to do, having by his incarnation, sufferings, and death upon the cross, fulfilled the duties and sustained the penalties of the moral law, and accomplished all the types of the ceremonial law—having verified all the prophecies which had been written concerning him, and made a complete atonement for sin; after that he had risen triumphantly from the dead, and conversed with his Apostles, the future administrators of his kingdom, for forty days, and given them sufficient instruction and authority; returned in

* Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, vol. ii. p. 321.

triumph to heaven from whence he came. In the human nature, which he had assumed into union with his godhead, (for his godhead being omnipresent could not change its place of residence) he went up to take possession of the glory which he had merited for himself and all his followers by his obedience unto death.

Two modes of expression are used in the Scriptures when they describe this event. Sometimes our Lord is said to have ascended, and sometimes to have been taken up, in consequence of which the ancients called it both the *ascension* and the *assumption*. The former of these terms denotes that it was by his own right and power that Christ ascended: and the latter that it was a judicial act of God the great lawgiver, assigning to Christ as mediator the reward of his work.

The place chosen for the scene of our Lord's ascent was mount Olivet. To the garden which lay at the foot of this mountain he had "oft-times "resorted, both alone and with his disciples, for "the purposes of secret prayer and religious "conversation." In this place "he had enjoyed "many delightful seasons of fellowship with God. "Every spot perhaps of that distinguished "ground had been consecrated by the footsteps "of a meditating, and the knees of an adoring "Saviour. Here also his dying sorrows began. "Well might a good man say, 'All places are "'happy, or miserable, in proportion as God "'vouchsafes or denies his gracious presence "'therein.' In Gethsemane, where Jesus had so "often experienced the ravishing consolations of "his heavenly Father's countenance; in this very "Gethsemane did the same blessed Jesus expe-"rience the first outpourings of his Almighty Fa-"ther's wrath. Here it was that his righteous soul

" became 'exceeding sorrowful even unto death.'
" Here it was that the spotless victim began to
" feel the dreadful weight of imputed guilt, and
" the terrors of avenging justice;—when his
" inward agony forced his very blood from its
" veins, which made its way even through his
" threefold vesture and fell clotted to the ground;
" —when himself lay prostrate on the ground
" with his garments literally rolled in blood*."
From a higher part of this same mountain our Lord ascended. And there seems to have been a peculiar design in the choice of the place. Let the believer remember to set future glory against present sufferings. Let him, in imitation of his Lord, "for the joy that is set before him, endure
" the cross, despising the shame." Let him
" reckon that the sufferings of the present time
" are not worthy to be compared with the glory
" that shall be revealed in him."

The place to which our Lord ascended was the highest heaven, the peculiar residence of Jehovah. He " was made higher than the
" heavens." " He ascended up far above all
" heavens." The believer will concur with the divine appointment, and acknowledge that no elevation could be too great a reward for him who " made his soul an offering for sin." The glory which he received was no more than an equivalent for the work he had performed. The glory which he had given to God, and the salvation which he had procured for men, entitled him to the highest exaltation from God, and to the highest love, gratitude, and adoration from man.

As there was nothing relative to the person and work of the Messiah, which was not antici-

* See two Sermons, entitled, " Jesus seen of Angels."

pated by types and prophecies under the preceding dispensation, and nothing so prefigured or predicted which was not accomplished in him; we may rationally expect to find that an event so glorious to him, and so important to his church, was the subject of frequent notice in the Old Testament. And the expectation will not be disappointed. For the exaltation of Joseph from a dungeon to the government of Egypt; the exaltation of David, after a long series of sufferings, to the throne of Israel; the removal of the ark to mount Zion; and the annual entrance of the high priest into the holy of holies—these were all typical representations of our Lord's ascension. Prophecies also of this glorious event are not rare. The ancient church sang of it while they carried the ark of God to mount Zion in this triumphal strain; "Thou has ascended on "high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou "hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebel-"lious also, that the Lord God might dwell "among them." (Psal. lxviii. 18; Comp. Eph. iv. 8.) On the same occasion and with a similar reference to Christ, the forty-seventh Psalm seems to have been composed. Therein the church exultingly proclaims that "God is gone "up with a shout, even the Lord with the sound "of a trumpet:" and adds, "Sing praises to "God, sing praises; sing praises unto our king, "sing praises: for God is the king of all the "earth; sing ye praises with understanding." The twenty-fourth Psalm speaks still more copiously and distinctly on the subject. Therein we contemplate "the Lord of glory, after his resur-"rection from the dead, making his entry into "the eternal temple in heaven, as of old by the "symbol of his presence he took possession of that

" figurative and temporary structure which once
" stood upon the hill of Sion. We are to conceive
" him gradually rising from mount Olivet into the
" air, taking the clouds for his chariot, and ascend-
" ing up on high; while some of the angels, like the
" Levites in procession, attendant on the triumph-
" ant Messiah in the day of his power, demand that
" those everlasting gates and doors, hitherto shut
" and barred against the race of Adam, should be
" thrown open for his admission into the realms of
" bliss:—' Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be
" ' ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of
" ' glory shall come in.' On hearing this voice of
" jubilee and exultation from the earth, the abode
" of misery and sorrow, the rest of the angels,
" astonished at the thought of a MAN claiming a
" right of entrance into their happy regions, ask
" from within, like the Levites in the temple,
" ' Who is this king of glory?' To which the
" attendant angels answer, in a strain of joy and
" triumph,—(and let the church of the redeemed
" answer with them)—' The LORD strong and
" ' mighty, the Lord mighty in battle'—the
" LORD JESUS, victorious over sin, death and
" hell. Therefore we say, and with holy transport
" we repeat it, ' Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
" ' and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the
" ' king of glory shall come in.' And if any ask,
" ' Who is the king of glory?' To heaven and
" earth we proclaim aloud—'The LORD of Hosts,'
" all-conquering MESSIAH, head over every crea-
" ture, the leader of the armies of Jehovah, ' He is
" ' the king of glory.' Even so, glory be to thee,
" O Lord most high! Amen. Hallelujah*."

* Dr. Horne on the twenty-fourth Psalm. In addition to these prophecies, the reader may consult Ezek. xliv. 2, 3; Dan. vii. 13, 14; Micah ii. 13.

We believe this important article of our creed on the evidence afforded in the word of God. Therein we have the testimony of angels, and of holy men, who could not be deceived themselves, as the fact which they attest was evident to their outward senses; nor could they be deceivers of others, as they had no motive to impose on mankind. (Acts i. 9. 11.) All that immense mass of evidence, both internal and external, by which the Bible is proved to be the word of God, demonstrates also the reality of this comfortable truth, that our Lord hath "ascended into "heaven."

In this article of our creed we comprehend not merely the fact and its attendant circumstances, but also various considerations which are inseparably connected with it. A mere assent to the naked fact, without a reference to other circumstances, can afford no comfort to the conscious mind, nor can it be any foundation for confidence toward God in the use of the subsequent prayer.

But when we profess to believe that God's "only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ "ascended into the heavens," we are supposed to exercise faith in him as the atoning sacrifice and the justifying righteousness of his people. We profess to believe that he hath "finished the "work which was given him to do" on earth, by satisfying divine justice on our behalf and giving everlasting honour to the holy law of God. For his assumption to his mediatorial throne was a part of that visible testimony which was given to Christ that his vicarious engagements were fulfilled, and consequently a material part of that foundation on which our peace of conscience and hope of salvation are built. His ascension was

a part of the stipulated reward annexed to his sufferings and death. For this therefore the Mediator pleaded as his right in his last prayer before his agony, saying, "I have glorified thee "on earth: I have finished the work, which "thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, "glorify thou me with thine own self, with the "glory which I had with thee before the world "was."

Moreover, while we profess our faith in our Lord's ascension, we also profess to believe that he hath opened a new and living way for us, that we may follow him whither he is gone before us; that he hath removed all obstructions to our salvation; that he hath triumphed over all our enemies; that he hath procured for us all necessary grace which he is ascended to bestow; and that he hath prepared a place for us, according to his own declaration made to his disciples:— "In my father's house are many mansions; if it "were not so I would have told you; I go to "prepare a place for you. And if I go and "prepare a place for you, I will come again and "receive you unto myself, that where I am, "there ye may be also." Accordingly if we are believers in Christ, then we are "risen with "Christ;" and we are also ascended with him, and "made to sit in heavenly places in Christ "Jesus." And if we are now ascended with him, by virtue of union with him and attraction from him, as members of his mystical body, and in heart and affection, we shall hereafter ascend in body and soul personally and really. For he ascended as "the head of his body the church." He "entered into heaven as our forerunner."

Now do we believe, that "our Lord Jesus "Christ is ascended into the heavens," viewing

the subject in this extensive and practical view? With respect to the naked fact, "the devils "believe it and tremble." It will be of no avail to us that we avow it as an article of our creed, unless we mix an operative faith with our assent and avowal.

We proceed to consider the prayer of our collect, in which we implore grace that we may be enabled to imitate the example which Christ's ascension furnishes.

The history of the life of Christ is analogically repeated in the experience of all his members. This analogy we have noticed in the review which we have taken, in the course of these Essays, of the principal circumstances recorded in the Gospel. Christians are imitators of Christ in his birth, circumcision, baptism, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. For they are born again, are circumcised with the true circumcision of the Spirit, are baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, they die to sin, are buried with Christ in baptism, rise to newness of life, and ascend with him so as to sit with him in heavenly places.

In the petition now before us, which is founded on the doctrine of Christ's ascension, we pray that we may ascend in heart and mind to heaven whither Christ is gone before us—that, feeling the attractive power of his love, we may be drawn to follow him in holy desire and contemplation, according to his own promise, which may be applied to his ascension as well as to his crucifixion. "If I be lifted up from the earth, "I will draw all men unto me." This petition shews the efficient nature of faith, and the connexion which exists between genuine faith and true holiness.

O how important a prayer! For of what avail will it be to us that Christ is ascended into heaven, unless we are prepared, by following him now in affection, to be hereafter for ever with him? His ascension and session at the right hand of God must be a source of terror to the soul, if seriously considered, unless the affections, cleaving to him, feel the power of his ascension, as the sap of the vegetable plant feels the influence of the vernal sun. The sapless lifeless stalk must be withered by the brightness of the summer solstice.

"Where our treasure is, there will our hearts "be also." If we be "risen with Christ," we shall "seek those things which are above, where "Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." If we be "dead, and our life be hid with Christ in "God," we shall "set our affections on things "above, and not on things on the earth." If we believe in Christ for pardon of our sins and reconciliation with our offended God, we love him with a supreme affection. And as true love covets the society and presence of the object beloved, all true believers, under the influence of gratitude, aspire to that place where Jesus is. They consider themselves as "pilgrims and strangers upon earth," as "citi-"zens of heaven," as "fellow-citizens with the "saints and of the household of God." They feel the obligations under which they are laid, both by duty and interest, to "abstain from "fleshly lusts which war against the soul;" not to "mind earthly things;" and to "have their "conversation in heaven, from whence they "look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ." That place is always most dear to us and uppermost in our thoughts which we consider as our

home, our resting-place, the residence of our nearest relatives and bosom friends. If we are absent from it, thitherward our hearts tend, even while our bodies are remote from it; and if we are journeying towards it, our minds move faster than our feet, and love adds speed to our motion. This is verified in the experience of those, who love God as their father, Christ as their elder brother and friend, and glorified saints as their common brethren and "fellow heirs of the "grace of life."

Now, as love to Christ is inseparable from faith in him, it is supposed by our church that all who recite her creed and join in her collects are ascending in heart and mind heavenwards. Let the reader consider if her charitable hope of himself be founded. But though the tendency of the believing soul be heavenwards, yet is there need to pray for an acceleration of motion; for, how often does corruption, like a heavy load, weigh us down to earth; guilt, like a dark cloud, hide the object of our love from view; worldly things distract our attention; and death interpose a tremendous barrier between us and our eternal home! Under these circumstances we cannot be too earnest in praying that "Almighty God "would cause us in heart and mind to ascend "heavenwards." Our comfort in praying for this blessing is built on the omnipotence of him from whom we implore it.

We solicit further grace that "with Christ "we may continually dwell;"—that, while we continue on earth, our hearts and minds may have their settled abode in heaven, being "surely "fixed there where true joys are to be found;" and that shortly we may locally be removed thither both in soul and body. O ravishing

thought! May it transport and immoveably rivet our hearts to Christ, whose presence and love constitute the very essence of heaven.

Reader, dost thou believe that Christ is ascended into heaven? If thy belief of this doctrine be "the faith of God's elect," thou hast the witness of its truth in thine own bosom. The desires which prevail there are evidences of it. The virtue of Christ's ascension accompanies "the power of his resurrection." Does our collect express the fervent desire of your soul? If it do not, you cannot join in the sensibilities of the church on earth, and surely are not prepared to concur in the worship of the church above; you are uninterested in the triumphs of our glorified Leader; you have no share in the largesses which at his ascension he bestowed on his church; you are in an unpardoned and unsanctified state; and, consequently, have no title to his kingdom, nor qualification for it.

But some of the sincere followers of Christ, who "in heart and mind ascend" after him, follow him trembling, as if the victory were not won, nor the spoils secured. Let them consider the plenary declarations of Scripture on the subject, and the experience of the saints, especially of those who have "fought the good "fight and finished their course." Hark, the Captain of your salvation calls to you from his exalted throne, points to his vanquished enemies, and in the words of Joshua thus addresses you:—"Come near, and put your feet upon "their necks. Fear not, nor be dismayed, be "strong and of good courage; for thus shall the "Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye "fight." Listen, trembling saint, to the sounds which earth reverberates to the skies:—"God is

"gone up with a shout, the Lord with the "sound of a trumpet." "He hath led captivity "captive." And let thy feeble voice be mingled with the triumphant strain, whilst thou art making thy way through hosts of enemies to the place of thine eternal abode.

The benefits which the ascending Saviour bestows, are designed for sinners, "yea, for the "rebellious." He "is exalted to be a prince "and a Saviour, to give repentance and remis- "sion of sins." Let none therefore be discouraged who are really desirous of an interest in him. But let them "seek, and they shall find" that he is "able to save to the uttermost all "that come unto God by him."

But if these pages should meet the eyes of any persons who feel no relentings of heart, no desire after the pardoning and sanctifying grace of Christ, let them, like the rulers of Israel, on the accession of Jehu to the throne of Israel, be "exceedingly afraid;" for if the powers "of "darkness stood not before him, how shall they "stand?" If his enemies, who "will not that "he should reign over them," do not "kiss the "Son," submit to his sceptre, and "take his yoke "upon them;" verily they will shortly "call on "the rocks and mountains to fall on them and "hide them from the face of him that sitteth on "the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" For when the great day of his wrath is come, who shall be able to stand?

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.

O God, the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph into thy kingdom in heaven; we beseech thee leave us not comfortless, but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

THE tender concern which our blessed Lord manifested for his dear disciples previous to his ascension into heaven, displays the ardour of that love with which he loved them. When he apprised them that he was speedily to be removed from them, he entered into their distressing feelings on the occasion with most anxious sympathy, and provided for their support and consolation by the most affectionate and comprehensive promises. "I will not," says he, "leave you com-"fortless; I will come unto you."

If it should be asked, in what manner this promise is to be understood, since our Lord's personal presence was to be withdrawn from his church till "the time of the restitution of "all things," an answer to the inquiry may be given in his own words:—"I will pray the "Father, and he shall give you another Com-"forter that he may abide with you for ever; "even the Spirit of truth, whom the world

"cannot receive, because it seeth him not, "neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for "he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come "unto you." The change of persons here observable is to be explained by the union which subsists between the persons of the Godhead, in consequence of which the acts of each are attributed to the other.

It may further be inquired whether this promise was confined to the twelve Apostles in their personal capacity, or whether it is to be extended to all the members of the Christian church unto the end of time. Here again our Lord's own words will supply a solution of the difficulty. For he says, "Lo, I am with you "always, even to the end of the world;" which must undeniably relate to the Apostles in their official capacity as representatives of the universal church which was to be built on them as its foundation, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. For the Apostles, personally considered, when they had served their generation, by the will of God, fell asleep, and ceased to need the promised consolation; but there are disciples of our Lord who still sojourn in the wilderness, and therefore still need divine support and help. It is certain that our church understands the promise in this extensive sense, for thereon our collect for this day is founded.

Our present collect consists of a preface and a prayer. The preface recites that act of divine mercy which has been commemorated in the church during the preceding week, the assumption of our Lord Jesus Christ to the kingdom in heaven—and the prayer implores the communication of the Holy Ghost, in the character

of Comforter, as the promised result of that assumption.

God is addressed in the introduction of our collect as "the King of glory;" a title which is justly due to him in whatever view he is contemplated. But in that view which we are now called to take of him, it seems peculiarly appropriate. For however brightly his glory shines in creation and providence, it shines with a clearer lustre in redemption. In the face of Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, both angels and men discern a glory that excelleth. And it is not only the general aspect of the scheme of grace which is radiant and reflects glory on the divine attributes, but every specific act of mercy which the Gospel discloses, diffuses its own beams, and adds to the general blaze which issues from the crown of "the King of "glory." And among these none is more splendid than that instance which we now commemorate. For which of the divine perfections is not illustrated by the assumption of the Mediator Jesus to the mediatorial kingdom, as the head of his mystical body the church? All irradiation is primarily from the sun. All honour descends from the throne. And all glory, whether that with which the Son of God as Mediator is invested, or that which is prepared for his redeemed, flows from God as the Sovereign King in Zion.

The act which is ascribed in our collect to divine mercy, is the exaltation of the Messiah to the throne prepared for him in heaven. We have already remarked, that both the resurrection and ascension of Christ are spoken of in Scripture after different manners, being some-

times attributed to the Father, and sometimes to the Son himself. Both views, as we have shewn, are strictly just. In our collect the exaltation of our Lord is ascribed to God the Father, who in the covenant of grace had stipulated to bestow this reward on the Mediator of that covenant for his obedience unto death. "Christ "Jesus, being in the form of God, thought it not "robbery to be equal with God: but made him-"self of no reputation, and took upon him the "form of a servant, and was made in the likeness "of men: and being found in fashion as a man, "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto "death, even the death of the cross. WHERE-"FORE God also hath highly exalted him, and "given him a name which is above every name: "that at the name of Jesus every knee should "bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, "and things under the earth; and that every "tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, "to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 6–11.

The manner in which Christ was exalted to the kingdom in heaven, is noted in our collect. It was worthy of God who exalted him, and of Christ who was exalted. This ascension was a most triumphant scene. All heaven was in concert above; and all the peopled air was harmony, as he ascended through it. Some of the Cherubic host were dispatched as heralds, making proclamation as they flew, "Lift up "your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye "everlasting doors, that the King of glory may "come in."—"Who is this King of glory?" chaunted others of the ecstatic legions. "The "Lord," Jehovah in human nature, "strong and "mighty" to save; "the Lord mighty in battle," the conqueror of sin and death and hell, return-

ing triumphant from his successful warfare: "the "Lord of Hosts," Creator of us "angels, and the "Ransomer of the nations of them that are "saved;" "he is the King of glory."—"Who "shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who "shall stand in his holy place?" "He," of whom alone it could be said, that he had "clean "hands and a pure heart:" In his nature totally sinless; and in his life, the perfect fulfiller of all righteousness.—Thus did "God go up with a "shout, and the Lord with the sound of a "trumpet." Attending spirits sang, "Rise up, "Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered;" whilst the gazing disciples responsive from below, cried out, "Return, O Lord," now in the power of thy Spirit, and hereafter in the brightness of thy personal coming, "to the many thousands of "Israel!" Might it not be said concerning those highly favoured persons, who were witnesses of his ascension, "They have seen thy goings, O God, "even the goings of my God, my King, in the "sanctuary: the singers went before, the players "on instruments followed after?" All the joy of the blessed was in full exercise, all the melody of heaven was at its height, when Jesus was ushered to his throne; and "when, as a lamb "newly slain," and as a God totally and finally victorious, he "entered into the holy place "for us."

No such occasion of triumph as this had ever occurred before. At the creation indeed, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. At the nativity "a mul-"titude of the heavenly host praised God and "said, Glory to God in the highest, and on "earth peace, good-will towards men." When their God lay prostrate in the garden, hung on

the cross, and was deposited in the grave, we may almost suppose their songs of joy to have been turned into lamentation and mourning and woe. But at his resurrection their harps were tuned anew, and, as it were, prepared against the festival of his coronation. Then their acclamations and hosannas exceeded all preceding efforts. For if they praised God when the foundation of the magnificent structure was laid, how much more when the top-stone was laid on it! And if angels sang in triumph, what must their joys have been who had been admitted into paradise on the credit of the great sacrifice, when they saw their Redeemer in their own nature enter among them crowned with glory and praise! We cannot conceive aright of their feelings: we must wait to know what they were.

The personal triumph of our Saviour was now complete, for all his enemies and ours were vanquished, and "all power in heaven and earth" was vested in him as the mediatorial King in Sion. But the triumph is not yet concluded. The Epinikion, or song of victory, continues to be sung. And every fresh instance of conversion and glorification re-invigorates the chorus; for "there is joy in the presence of the angels of "God over every sinner that repenteth," and how much more over every ransomed soul that is added to "the general assembly and church "of the first-born" who dwell with God in heaven! Every such instance is a fresh trophy of the Redeemer's victory, a new star in his glorious crown.

The ministers of the Gospel are commanded to say unto Zion, "Thy God *reigneth*." The once crucified Saviour of sinners now sits on his throne, and reigns for the confusion of his ene-

mies and the salvation of his subjects. O how great should be our joy to-day, while we contemplate him as invested with the royal diadem, and crowned Lord of all! May we be enabled to join in the triumph of the skies.

The prayer of our collect implores the promised communication of the Holy Ghost to our souls in the character of Comforter, as the result of our Lord's assumption into heaven, and thus connects the commemoration of the ascension with its pentecostal effects.

The petitionary part of our collect is founded on the doctrine of Christ's ascension to heaven, which secures to his church the comprehensive blessing for which we pray, according to our Lord's most gracious declaration,—"It is expe- "dient for you that I go away; for if I go not "away, the Comforter will not come unto you; "but if I depart, I will send him unto you. "And when he is come, he will reprove" (or convince) "the world of sin, and of righteousness, "and of judgment." John xvi. 7, 8. "The "counsel of peace" between the persons of Jehovah had settled this momentous branch of the scheme of redemption, which relates to the conversion and sanctification of the fallen soul of man. The mission of the Spirit was to result from the glorification and intercession of the great High Priest; who, having made the atonement and purchased salvation, was to make his work effectual by pouring out the Holy Ghost through the preaching of his Gospel.

When our Lord promised that he would not leave his disciples comfortless, and when we pray that we may not be left comfortless, but that the Holy Ghost may be sent to comfort us, it is implied that, independent of God, we have no

source to which we can repair for comfort. Every earthly cistern to which man foolishly resorts, is found on examination to be a broken cistern that can hold no water. The fruit which we expect to gather from "the tree of the know-"ledge of good and evil," proves, like the apples of Sodom, fair without, but full of fetid dust within. Fallen man, till he obtains comfort from God the Holy Ghost, "feedeth on ashes; a "deceived heart hath turned him aside, so that "he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not "a lie in my right hand?" He "spends his "money for that which is not bread, and his "labour for that which satisfieth not," till he "hears the voice of sovereign love, crying, "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that "which is good, and let your soul delight itself "in fatness."

The word which our Lord has used in the promise before recited, (John xiv. 18,) is very emphatic and significant:—"I will not leave you "*orphans:* I will come unto you"—*i. e.* "I will "be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons "and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." As an orphan is left destitute of parental direction, provision, support, and comfort—is exposed to oppression and misery—so also are we, independent of divine favour and care. And every conscious sinner feels it to be so. Without consolation from above, the awakened sinner would be "of all men most miserable." For while others find some shadows of comfort in the world, he can find none. He is aware of his situation as a sinner, bereft of whatever is valuable to the soul, and incapable of making provision for his own safety and comfort. In his own estimation he is "poor and miserable and wretched and

"blind and naked." He is a stranger upon earth in the midst of oppressors. His enemies, visible and invisible, are many and strong, and they bear a tyrannous hate against him. The connexion between God and man as father and child having been broken by the fall, man may truly be characterised as an orphan*. And when he is made sensible of it, he says with the prodigal, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say "unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven "and before thee, and am no more worthy to be "called thy son."

In the state of primary conviction, when the guilt of sin is first revealed to the mind and becomes burdensome to the conscience, no creature in heaven or earth can communicate comfort to the soul. He only who hath wounded can heal. There is no balm, but the balm of Gilead, that can avail, and God the Holy Ghost only can effectually apply it. He must "take of the "things which are Christ's," of the virtue of his blood, the merit of his righteousness, and the efficacy of his intercession, and "shew them" to the heart, before the conscience can be pacified and the soul relieved from its fears and distresses. And in every subsequent trial and temptation that occurs between conversion and glorification, God the Holy Ghost alone can comfort and support. Whatever means may be used or instruments employed, he is the agent without whom means and instruments are wholly ineffectual.

With strict propriety is God the Holy Ghost

* "Poor orphan, in the wide world scattered,
"As budding branch rent from the native tree,
"And thrown forth until it be withered;
"Such is the state of man."

Spenser.

called, in the Scriptures and in our collect, "THE "Comforter." For to "comfort them that are "cast down" is his peculiar office and delight, to which all his other offices are subordinate and subservient. Doth he convince of sin? It is that he may lead to Christ. Does he act as a Spirit of bondage? It is with a view to another branch of his work in which he acts as the Spirit of adoption. He wounds for the purpose of healing; he casts down, in order that he may lift up again. Is it asked, how doth he fulfil his gracious office of comforting the hearts of his people? Those who know will easily solve the question by answering, It is by the testimony which he bears of Christ; by discovering to the eye of faith the love of God in Christ Jesus and the all-sufficiency of that salvation which Christ hath wrought out for guilty, polluted, and helpless sinners. Speak ye that can, and testify whether this title be not justly given to the Spirit of Jesus.

How appropriate to our orphan-lips is this prayer of our church! "We beseech thee, leave "us not comfortless, but send thine Holy Ghost "to comfort us." Look up to your heavenly Father, ye sons and daughters of sorrow and affliction,—ye "prisoners of hope,"—ye forlorn travellers through this vale of tears. "The Lord "careth for you." "He will hear your cry;" he will "send his Holy Ghost to comfort you," and by his grace finally "wipe away all tears "from your eyes."

But we do not satisfy ourselves with praying for present comfort: for we know that this is not the place of our rest, and that, while we are here below, we are only indulged with an occasional taste of the water of life. Our desires

therefore extend further. We look with a wishful eye towards the fountain-head of consolation. Nothing will content the awakened believing soul but "an exaltation to the same place whither our "Saviour Christ is gone before." For love naturally affects union with its beloved object. But is not this request presumptuous? Shall the poor who lie in the dust, and the beggar whose abode is the dunghill, dare to ask that he may be set among the princes of the King of kings? Our petition is not presumptuous: it is not an arrogant and blind confidence which leads us to present this request to the mercy-seat. For it is founded on the declared purpose of God, on the divine scheme of redemption, on the promises of God, on the merit and intercession of Christ. He is "gone before," as "the head," "surety," and "forerunner" of his redeemed. He is gone for the express purpose of "preparing a place "for us" (John xiv. 2, 3); and he hath said, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast "given me, be with me where I am, that they "may behold my glory, which thou hast given "me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation "of the world." John xvii. 24. This is the tenour of Christ's intercession, and we know that "God heareth him always." On this our confidence in prayer is founded, and we know that it cannot be disappointed.

When we pray for an "exaltation to the place "whither our Saviour Christ is gone before," we implore every qualification which is needful for that exaltation. We include in our petition sanctifying and persevering grace, as well as "an "abundant entrance" at last "into God's ever-"lasting kingdom." And oh! that while we ask for such great and glorious blessings, we may

ever remember that "our Saviour Christ liveth "and reigneth with the Father and the Holy "Ghost, ever one God, world without end." This consideration will quicken our desires, and support our confidence. It will prove a prop to our faith which cannot be shaken. It will encourage us to shew all "diligence to the full assur- "ance of hope unto the end."

WHITSUNDAY.

God, who, as at this time, didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour; who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

"THE conclusion of this great festival season," which in the primitive church reached from Easter to Whitsunday, "was Pentecost, taken "in the stricter sense for that particular day, "commonly called Whitsunday, or Pentecost, "when they (the primitive Christians) commemorated the descent of the Holy Ghost upon "the Apostles; which happened upon the day "which the Jews called Pentecost, or the fiftieth "day after the passover, (a day of great note "among the Jews both for the memorial of the "law delivered at mount Sinai, and also for the "gathering and bringing in of their harvest.) It "retained the same name of Pentecost among "the Christians; though they kept it not as a "Jewish feast, but only as a commemoration of "the glorious effusion of the Spirit in the gift of "tongues and other miraculous powers, made at "this time upon the disciples. Hence it had also

" the name of ημερα Πνευματος, the day of the Holy " Ghost, as we find in Nazianzen and others. " And some learned men think*, it was hence " called Whitsunday, partly because of those vast " diffusions of light and knowledge, which on " this day were shed upon the Apostles in order " to the enlightening of the world; but princi- " pally because, this being one of the stated times " of baptism in the ancient church, they who " were baptized put on white garments, in token " of that pure and innocent course of life they " had now engaged in. The original of this " feast is by some carried as high as the Apostles. " Epiphanius was of opinion that St. Paul meant " it in those words, when he said, 'he hastened " 'to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.' " (Acts xx. 16.) But because interpreters gene- " rally take it in another sense, we will lay no " stress upon it. However it is certain this feast " was observed in the time of Origen, for he " speaks of it in his books against Celsus; as " does also Tertullian before him, and Irenæus " before them both, in his book concerning " Easter, as the author of the questions under " the name of Justin Martyr informs us."—" St. " Austin says, The law was written by the finger " of God, and given to Moses on this day: and " that was a type of the Holy Ghost, called the " finger of God in the Gospel; which Christ pro- " mised to his disciples as a Comforter, and sent " to them on the fiftieth day after his passion " and resurrection. And all such eminent facts " as were done upon certain days were annually " celebrated in the church, that the anniversary

* Cave's Primitive Christianity, Part I. chap. vii. p. 192.

" feast might preserve the useful and necessary " memorial of them*."

The collect for this day consists of a preface and a prayer. In the preface we celebrate that instance of divine mercy which God vouchsafed to his church on the day of Pentecost;—and in the prayer we implore the same mercy for ourselves.

It is scarcely needful to remark that the faithful people, mentioned in our collect as taught of God, were the Apostles and first Evangelists, who were to be employed as God's ambassadors to a lost world in consequence of the commission which they had received to " preach the Gospel " to every creature," and to " disciple all nations, " baptizing them in the name of the Father, and " of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Of this astonishing instance of divine mercy a particular account is given us in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, which properly opens with a relation of the manner in which the Apostles were qualified for the execution of their high office, and then proceeds to a detail of the success with which it was attended. On that interesting event, the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, we shall enlarge a little, as being referred to in the introduction of our collect.

We are informed by the sacred historian, (Acts ii. 1–4) that " when the day of Pentecost " was fully come, the Apostles were all with " one accord in one place. And suddenly there " came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing " mighty wind, and it filled all the house where " they were sitting. And there appeared unto

* Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, book xx. chap. vii. sect. 7.

"them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat "upon each of them. And they were all filled "with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak "with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them "utterance."

God had from the beginning of the world revealed himself to man through the medium of sensible objects. And indeed it doth not appear how God, as a spiritual substance, could have made himself known to us without them. His nature, threefold personality, mode of subsistence, moral perfections, and will, were exhibited, previously to the coming of Christ, by a long train of rites and ceremonies, extending from Adam to the termination of the Jewish economy. These all ceased to be in force when he came of whom they were shadowy representations. Yet under the new dispensation, though confessedly more spiritual than the former, God hath chosen to make use of the same method of instruction, explaining spiritual things by natural. Of this method our Lord's parables, St. Peter's vision, the Christian sacraments, the whole book of the Revelation, and the event which we this day commemorate, are instances. And inasmuch as words are the signs of ideas, and all our ideas are derived through the medium of our senses, instruction by words, and instruction by signs, are nearly allied to each other.

The marvellous event which our collect celebrates is a most important link in that grand and golden chain of salvation which reaches from eternity to eternity, originating in the eternity that is past, and to be perfected in the eternity which is to come. It is one of those glorious circumstances which were all comprehended and secured in the antemundane covenant of redemp-

tion. For as Christ was to receive the reward of his sufferings in the conversion, sanctification, and salvation of a great multitude of human souls, innumerable as the dew-drops of the morning; it was necessary that his Gospel should be published, that heralds should be qualified for the office of proclaiming it, and that their message should be accompanied by a divine agency for the purpose of rendering it effectual.

Forasmuch as this event constituted an important article in the covenant of redemption, we need not wonder to find that it was a frequent subject of prediction before its accomplishment. It was comprehended in the first promise made to our guilty parents in Paradise, and progressively explained, with increasing distinctness, by a long train of inspired prophets, among whom Joel is the most remarkable with respect to this event. (See Acts ii. 16–21.) At length the great Prophet himself appeared, and spake plainly of the Comforter and his work.

It may be necessary to remark, that previous to the manifestation of God in the flesh there were many partial effusions of the Spirit on the church at different periods, and that all real godliness from the beginning, both in the church and in the individuals of which it was composed, was the result of divine influence. There were from the beginning a faithful few who "worshipped God in the Spirit," being united to Christ by faith, and deriving from him that vital energy whereby they were enabled to live to him. But the grand discovery of his grace to all nations was reserved till the Son of man was glorified.

From the time of our Lord's ascension to the day of Pentecost, during the space of ten days,

the Apostles and the other disciples, being one hundred and twenty in number, waited in the performance of religious exercises at Jerusalem for the accomplishment of the promise which they had received. It is the method of divine wisdom to try the faith of believers before they receive promised blessings. But they who wait on the Lord, having the warrant of his word for their expectation, are never disappointed.

The time which was chosen by God for that marvellous display of his grace which we now commemorate, discovers his wisdom, and the unity of design which prevails in all his dispensations. Pentecost was one of the three annual Jewish festivals, at which all the males were obliged to appear at Jerusalem. At one of these, *viz.* the passover, our Lord had been crucified. And he was glorified at another by the mission of his Spirit just fifty days afterwards. The feast of Pentecost was observed in commemoration of the promulgation of the law on mount Sinai, of which the effusion of the Spirit was the antetype; for thereby the holy law, which had been written at Sinai on tables of stone by the finger of God, was now by the same almighty agency written on "the fleshly tables of the" human "heart." And it happened providentially that the day of Pentecost fell on the Christian Sabbath in the year of which we are speaking, "the acceptable year of the Lord." On that day the first fruits of the future harvest were also offered to God and anointed with holy oil; in a pre-ordered correspondence with which appointed ceremony, the first fruits of the Christian church from among all nations were now offered up to God, and received "an unction "from the Holy One." The solemnity of this

festival, the general expectation of the Messiah which was spread abroad, and the commodious length of the days, were circumstances likely to bring together a vast concourse of people, as we find from the sacred history to have been the fact. These, assembled from all parts of the civilized word into which the Jewish creed had penetrated, would on their return home widely make known the miracle which they had witnessed, and thereby prepare the way of the Apostles when they afterwards came to preach the Gospel to their several countrymen. (See Acts ii. 5.)

The manner in which this discovery of divine grace was made, corresponds with the usual method of God's procedure. The divine interposition was accompanied with external symbols of God's presence, and these were appropriate, as on other occasions, to the intention of the visit. The propriety of this remark with a relation to former instances, may be justified by an appeal to the majestic and awful scenery amidst which the law was promulgated,—to the milder display of grace at the baptism of Jesus by John in Jordan,—and to various other manifestations of divine interference. The tokens of the divine presence, employed on the day of Pentecost, were a mighty rushing wind, and conical flames or tongues of fire. The correspondence of these emblems with the thing signified is evident; and yet it is so extensive as to call for some explanation.

Wind, or air in motion, is a frequent emblem of spiritual influence employed in the word of God. For brevity's sake we shall refer to no more than two, one from the Old Testament Scriptures and another from the New. Ezekiel's

parable (chap. xxxvii.; comp. ver. 8, 9, with ver. 14) will afford the former; and our Lord's words (John iii. 8) will supply the latter. To which we may add, that the official name of the third person in the godhead is borrowed, both in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, from the term which describes the fluid matter of the heavens.

That mighty gust of wind which rushed into the house where the Apostles were assembled and filled it, represented those extraordinary divine influences which qualified them for their office and accompanied them in the execution of it, whereby all opposition was made to fall before them. These miraculous powers were then necessary to the overthrow of a long-rooted system of idolatry, and to the first formation of the Christian church, which had to encounter all the malice and power of earth and hell. These extraordinary qualifications for the ministry are now no longer granted, for they are not necessary. But the ordinary influence of the Spirit is as necessary as ever; for there can be no spiritual life in the human soul, independently of its communication; as there can be no life, vegetable nor animal, without the influence of its emblem, the air, as is evident from experiments of the air-pump.

The invisibility and the mysterious nature of their operations form a striking point of resemblance between the symbol and the thing signified. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and "thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not "tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The effects in both cases are easily traced, but the mode of acting is occult. The independence of

the wind or air on the will of man exhibits the sovereignty of divine grace, both in its extraordinary and ordinary works. Who can command and direct the wind but God only? And they who are born of the Spirit, are "born not of "blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the "will of man; but of God." "He giveth not "account of any of his matters," either in his management of the natural or of the spiritual world; and no one has a right to say to him, "What dost thou?" The mighty power of the aërial element appears from its agency in the formation, dissolution, and reformation of the earth at the creation and deluge, and from the phenomena of earthquakes and hurricanes. And surely the dissolution of all the natural principles and habits of the human soul, and its reformation in the image and likeness of God, require a corresponding power of a much greater force and a more awful and marvellous nature. The revolution in the heart and life of a sinner, which conversion produces, is much more extensive and wonderful, and much more difficult to be effected, than any which the convulsions of nature have occasioned. (Acts ii. 37; ix. 1–16; xvi. 25.) The refreshing influence of the air in a hot day, especially under the scorching heat of the torrid zone, is very great. After severe labour and fatigue, in a paroxysm of faintness, its reviving effects are well known. And similar thereunto is the gracious breathing of the Spirit on the soul, when it has spent itself in the fruitless task of self-justification, when it is overcome by the scorching heat of the fiery law, and become faint with desire after the knowledge of salvation. The Holy Ghost is therefore emphatically called THE COMFORTER. And this very

image is employed (Acts iii. 19) for the purpose of illustrating the effect of pardoning grace; for the term used relates, in its primary signification, to the refreshment which the body derives from the cooling breeze*.

The pressure of the atmosphere is the cause of cohesion in the particles of matter, and of the gravitation of all bodies towards their centre. The suspension of this pressure at the flood produced the dissolution of the earth; and its restoration to its office, the reformation. And what produces the cohesion of the regenerate soul to the Lord Jesus Christ?—what the union of believers to each other in love, "the unity "of the Spirit in the bond of peace?"—what the gravitation of the soul to its foundation, and the adherence of the will and affections to their proper centre? It is that of which air is the emblem. For by the Spirit's work in convincing the soul of sin it is pressed to Christ, and by the pervading grace of the Holy Ghost the members of the Catholic church are knit together in love. Oh, that this principle may be more powerfully felt throughout the church of Christ! May we not also consider the elastic and expansive power of the air, which increases or is diminished in proportion as it is more or less heated, as emblematic of that influence by which the heart, naturally confined within the narrow limits of self and the world, is dilated in love both to God and man? Certain it is that an expansion takes place both in material and spiritual beings by the operation of their respective agents, and that an enlargement of heart is a certain and necessary effect of divine

influence. And without carrying the parallel to the extent to which it might be pushed, we shall only observe further, that all the motions of the heavenly bodies, all the operations of this vast machine of nature, and particularly all energy and motion in the body of man, are dependent on the agency of this element; and that, in like manner, all spiritual life and motion, both among the angels in heaven and the members of the church on earth, depend on the corresponding influence of the Holy Ghost.

The symbols of the divine presence employed at Pentecost were, as we have already observed, two-fold, *viz.* "a mighty rushing wind," and "tongues of fire," or conic flames*. The former of these has been explained, and the latter remains to be illustrated. In doing this we shall consider the emblem as exhibiting—in an appropriate sense, the grace which was bestowed on the Apostles and first ministers of the Gospel;—and, in a general sense, that grace which is common to all true believers.

The sacred historian informs us that "there "appeared to the Apostles cloven tongues like "as of fire," and that it (one of these tongues) "sat upon each of them." The communication of the Spirit had been the subject of prediction under this emblematic representation. For John the Baptist had told the Jews, that Christ should "baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with "fire." These cones of fire were cloven, or divided at their points into several parts, for the purpose of representing that variety of languages which the Apostles were immediately enabled

* The word *pyramid*, πυραμις, is derived from πυρ, fire; because fire always ascends in the figure of a cone.

to speak by the influence of the Holy Ghost, without the labour of learning them. And it has been supposed that the form of the mitres which were anciently worn by Christian bishops, bore an allusion to these cloven tongues. But it is a remark of more consequence, that as the confusion of tongues at Babel was eventually the occasion of separating the Gentiles from the knowledge and the church of God, so now a remedy was provided, by the gift of tongues at Zion, for their restoration to their long-lost privileges.

Without this gift and those other miraculous powers with which the Apostles were endowed, the rapid diffusion of Gospel-truth which took place would have been impossible. And it was the opinion of Archbishop Tillotson (whether founded or not we shall leave the event to determine) that whenever the fulness of the Gentiles is to be brought in, these will be again conferred. The time at which they ceased is not easily ascertained, nor is the question of much moment. Probably their cessation was gradual. It is of far higher consequence that we should bless God for their communication. For, without them, how could St. Paul, or any other Apostolic man who first planted Christianity in this island, have preached the Gospel to our heathen forefathers so as to "turn them from darkness to light, and "from the power of Satan unto God?" "O that "men would" therefore "praise the Lord for his "goodness, and for his wonderful works to the "children of men!"

Having shewn what the emblem of fire on the day of Pentecost was intended to represent in its appropriate sense, we proceed to consider that the common influence of the Spirit is also thereby

illustrated. When God appeared on mount Sinai, fire in the form of lightning was one of his attendants; and a glorious flame surrounded by a cloud was his emblem in the holy of holies of the Jewish tabernacle and temple. The Spirit of God in his official capacity is often thus symbolized in Scripture. In the prophecies of Isaiah he is called "the Spirit of burning" (chap. iv. 4), and the live-coal taken from the altar by one of the Seraphim with which the prophet's lips were touched (chap. vi. 6), seems to refer to his influence. The fire of Christ, as the refiner of his church, mentioned by Malachi, must relate to the work of his Spirit on the hearts of men (Mal. iii. 2); and John the Baptist, in the passage already cited, directly speaks of the Holy Ghost under the notion of fire. (Matt. iii. 11.) To which may be added from the Revelation of St. John, that "the seven lamps of fire burning "before the throne are the seven Spirits of "God."

Of material fire it may be observed that the sun is its source. And of that immaterial fire, the influence of the Holy Ghost, Christ, "the "Sun of righteousness," is the only and inexhaustible fountain. The Holy Spirit is therefore called the Spirit of Christ, because in the economy of redemption he acts in subserviency to the glory of the Son of God, and flows from him to his people. Whatever blessings we derive from the agency of the Holy Ghost, we owe to the meritorious work of the Lord Jesus.

Of both the sign and the thing signified it may be further observed that they are mysterious principles. Philosophers are on no subject more in the dark than concerning the nature and properties of fire. And in like manner spiritual

agency is a subject inaccessible to the understanding of man, and wrapt up in awful obscurity. The effects indeed are plainly perceptible in both cases, but the cause is unsearchable. Thankfully to receive, and to adore, constitute our duty. The awful obscurity that envelops spiritual subjects is no ground nor excuse for infidelity, since in the natural world there are secrets inscrutable by human intelligence.

The effects of material fire are different according as it acts in different ways. In some modes of action it is destructive to its subjects; in others, beneficial. So also is the influence of the Spirit. It is destructive to sin, but beneficial to the soul on which it acts. It burns up our lusts, but it cherishes and quickens the bosom of which it takes possession. Material fire is essential to the existence of life, whether vegetable or animal. The sap in vegetables, and the blood in animals, are kept in a state of fluidity, and caused to circulate, by its presence. The effects which result from a diminution of heat, during the winter season, in the vegetable world, are well known, as are also those of severe cold on the animal frame. A universal drowsiness, a mortification of the parts affected by the frost, and finally death, ensue. In the human soul there is no life but what is communicated and maintained by heat derived from the Holy Ghost. He is the author and giver of life. For naturally we are "dead in trespasses "and sins." We are in a state of total and universal torpor, till we are "quickened to new-"ness of life, and the love of God is shed abroad "in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto "us."

Fire or heat is usually accompanied with

light. And the Spirit of God, while his influence warms the heart, at the same time sheds light on the understanding. He brings us to the knowledge of ourselves, and to the knowledge of him "whom to know is life eternal." "In "his light we see light," and discern the objects with which we are conversant in their true colours. "He that is spiritual judgeth" (or discerneth) "all things." And while the Holy Ghost enlightens, he comforts. Who that has been almost frozen to death, and has basked afterwards in the sun-beams, or approached a fire, does not experimentally know how animating and refreshing is warmth to the material frame? The pleasing effects of an approximation to the sun, and a participation of its heat in the spring, are visible to the eye. (Cant. iii 11–13.) Similar whereunto is the reviving, reanimating, cheering action of the gracious Comforter on the hearts of his people. No comfort can be obtained by the awakened soul but from him.

Another effect of fire, both of the symbol and its antetype, is purification. The use of material fire in the decomposition of metals, in order to remove their dross, is well known. And a similar effect is produced by "the Spirit of "burning" on the human soul. Fire converts every thing, exposed to its action in a sufficient degree, into a resemblance of itself. So God the Holy Ghost transforms the soul in which he dwells into his own image. The heart which is set on fire by this heavenly flame, burns with indignation against sin and self, with love to Christ, with zeal for his glory, and a desire to be with him and like him.

A similar improvement may be made of the

effect produced by heat in sublimating the moisture of the earth, the sap of trees, and the blood of animals, whereby circulation is maintained throughout the frame of nature. Fire affects its source the sun, constantly ascending thitherwards; and it produces a similar tendency in all fluid bodies which it occupies. And thus the affections of the soul, when it is made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, seek their fountain and centre, God. Naturally, like frozen water, they are torpid and motionless, fixed to the earth by adamantine chains; but, when thawed by divine influence, they ascend towards heaven, and affect those "things which are above, where Christ "sitteth at the right hand of God."

Our prescribed limits prevent us from enlarging on this copious subject which has engaged our attention. Enough, however, has been said to shew that true philosophy is the hand-maid of religion, and that, so far from giving any sanction to the claims of infidelity, she is ready to lend her aid, were it necessary, to support the sacred fabric of revelation. It may be inferred that the glorious Author of creation and redemption is the same God, from the parallelism which appears between these two achievements of his wisdom and power. The curious lock, and the key which fits it, are not more easily proved to be the invention of the same artificer.

The ordinary work of the Spirit consists of two parts, corresponding with the faculties of the human soul which are its subjects—the illumination of the understanding, and the conversion or consolation of the heart, comprehending both the will and the affections. Conversion and consolation may properly be identified; for the heart cannot be truly turned to God without

deriving comfort from him, nor can comfort be derived from him unless the heart be turned to him. If a man's face be turned towards the sun when it shines in its strength, warmth must be experienced.

"God as at this time did teach the hearts of "his faithful people, by sending to them the "light of his Holy Spirit." Light is the emblem both of knowledge and comfort. It directs and it consoles. And this two-fold blessing, which was communicated in rich abundance to the primitive disciples of our Lord, we also have reason to expect in such a measure as our necessities require. For God hath promised to "give his Holy Spirit to them who ask him." And therefore we are taught to pray, that, "by the same Spirit" which was shed on the Apostles, "we may have a right judgment in "all things, and evermore rejoice in his holy "comfort."

The petitionary part of our collect is two-fold, corresponding with the introduction. It comports with the comprehensive promise made to the church:—"All thy children shall be taught "of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of "thy children." Isa. liv. 13. Supported by such a promise, we may "come boldly to the "throne of grace" with the words of our collect on our lips.

1. We pray for the illumination of our understandings, that by the teaching of God's Spirit "we may have a right judgment in all things." The promised inspiration of the Holy Ghost was not confined to the persons of the Apostles, but is co-extensive with the church of Christ. For the intercession of Christ by which it is secured was not made for them alone, but "for them

"also, which should believe on him through their "word," whether oral or written. With this the whole tenour of our liturgy, articles, and homilies concurs. And if due care be used in distinguishing between the ordinary and extraordinary operations of the Spirit, the danger of enthusiasm, in the bad sense of the word, will be prevented. In its true etymological meaning, it is essential to the existence of godliness. For "besides "many other evils that came by the fall of man, "the high power of man's reason and freedom "of will were wounded and corrupted, and all "men thereby brought into such blindness and "infirmity, that they cannot eschew sin except "they be illuminated and made free by an espe-"cial grace, that is to say, by a supernatural "help and working of the Holy Ghost*."

An acquaintance with the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel is of immense importance, for it is one of those things which "accompany "salvation." No peace of conscience can be enjoyed, unless the only foundation on which it can be built be discerned and understood. No holiness of heart can be attained without a perception of those motives by which alone it can be produced. A rectified judgment respecting the truth as it is in Jesus is a pre-requisite to all divine experience, and is one of those characteristics which distinguish the sober and devoted Christian from the wild fanatic. But a rectified judgment can only be derived from divine teaching. For, though the means of knowledge are afforded us in the Scriptures, the Bible is a sealed book until the reader is illuminated from above. Nicodemus and Saul of Tarsus had the

* Necessary erudition for a Christian man.

Bible in their hands and read it before their conversion, but they understood it not till they were taught of God. And many in our own days, who are well informed on subjects of human science, are ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God, because they seek not instruction from him whose prerogative it is to give man "a right judgment" in all spiritual matters. "Never let it be supposed that Christians can "serve God without the grace of God, because "some have been so weak as to surfeit the wise "with the presumption and folly of their spiritual "pretensions. The life of devotion is still the "gift of God; and it must be insisted upon with "our church that there is not in man one good "thought, one holy desire, but from the conti-"nual inspiration of the divine Spirit in all "things directing and ruling our hearts. With-"out this doctrine we may be scholars, and "critics, and men of taste; we may be monitors "and moralists of civil society; but we are no "longer to be considered as Christian divines, "neither will our labours be attended with any "saving effect*." And may it not be added that without inspiration from above no man is a Christian believer, since "faith" is "of the ope-"ration of God?" And the reason why divine instruction is not sought is, that no want of it is felt, and that it is even dreaded. A conviction of sin, of ignorance, and of imbecility, is the certain effect of divine illumination in its least degree, and a necessary preparative to greater degrees of it. Without this conviction, men will be "wise in their own conceits," and prefer "darkness to light because their deeds are evil."

* Bishop Horne's Charge to the Clergy of Norwich.

An attempt to enumerate all those things in which "a right judgment" is desirable, or even essential, would be vain. There are, however, three cardinal points of divinity of vast comprehension and consequence. And as a single clew will conduct through many intricacies, or as a right motion of the heart causes the blood to circulate through an immense number of arteries and veins, so an acquaintance with these fundamental articles will lead us into all necessary truth. These three momentous points are specified by our Lord, when he is speaking of the Spirit's work, (John xvi. 8, &c.) "When he is "come, he will reprove (or convince) the world "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*."

The doctrine of the fall is the first of these particulars, *viz.* that we are guilty, polluted, and helpless creatures. By Adam's transgression we are constituted "children of wrath," and by hereditary corruption are disqualified for heaven. Our actual transgressions are innumerable; and "the "wages of sin is death." Now this is a lesson in divinity which can be learned only in the school of Christ. Thousands, with the Bible in their hands and the Prayer Book on their lips, deny it; and far more assent to it without feeling any interest in it. Divine illumination is necessary to such a conviction of sin as produces alarm, humiliation, and a submission to the doctrine of salvation by grace.

This salvation by grace is the second point in

* It has been supposed that these three branches of divine instruction are distinctly described by Elihu, Job xxxiii. 13–30. The twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses may be rendered, "Lo all these things worketh God in three "gradations with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, "to be enlightened with the light of the living." Gr. schol. Διὰ τριῶν τύπων τροπων.

which "a right judgment" is indispensably necessary. The righteousness of the Son of God is the only foundation of human hope. We must know that "there is no other name under heaven "given among men by which we must be saved," before we shall trust in the only Saviour of sinners. That his blood cleanseth from all sin, and that his righteousness justifieth the ungodly, is knowledge that is essential to the peace of the awakened conscience and the comfort of the troubled heart. This head of doctrine includes the dignity of the Mediator's person, the vicarious object of his atonement and obedience, and the nature and office of faith. Now it is the office of the Holy Ghost to "take of the things that are "Christ's and to shew them unto us."

Sanctification, resulting from faith in the Lord Jesus, is a third point of immense consequence. For if "without holiness no man shall see the "Lord," and if we are naturally unholy and unable to sanctify ourselves, who can duly appreciate the value of "a right judgment" in this particular? The necessity and nature of holiness, our total want of it and inability to implant it in ourselves, are subjects on which we are sure to err without divine instruction. By many the doctrine of regeneration is treated with ridicule; and holiness is confounded with morality.

II. The second petition in our collect implores further grace with a view to the application of that knowledge which the Spirit communicates, to the purpose of spiritual consolation. The Holy Ghost is styled by our Lord "THE COMFORTER," because the communication of comfort to the souls of the redeemed is, next to the glory of God, the grand end of his mission, and that to which the other branches of his office are subservient.

The application of those truths, which are learned from the word of God through a divine influence accompanying it, is a distinct branch of the Spirit's office, and a work that is exclusively his own. The Bible contains the ground of comfort, and ministers, according to the commission which they have received, (Isa. xl. 1) proclaim that Gospel from which comfort is to be derived. But it is "God who comforteth "them that are cast down." The Holy Ghost "healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up "their wounds." This he doth as the Author of faith, without which the consolatory truths of Scripture afford no more relief to the conscious mind, than the cheering cordial can yield to the diseased and fainting body while it remains in its phial. When Nathan said to David, after the confession which he made of his heinous guilt, "the Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt "not die," a basis for consolation was laid. But the criminal could not take it to himself without the aid of the Holy Ghost, as we learn from his earnest intercession in the fifty-first Psalm. If he could, by the mere exertion of his natural powers, have made a full use of the blessing of pardon which had been graciously vouchsafed to him, he needed not to have addressed the mercy-seat with those importunate supplications which he has recorded for the use of succeeding penitents. His petitions will illustrate the corresponding petition of our collect, "Purge me with hyssop "and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be "whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and "gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken "may rejoice. Cast me not away from thy pre-"sence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and

"uphold me with thy free Spirit." The communication of comfort to the penitent soul is the act of God. Those who have "a right judgment "in all things" discern clearly their need of the comforting grace of God. "If the whole of the "interposition of God consist in the clear pro-"posal of the Gospel, opportunely made, why is "omnipotence required for it? Why are those "magnificent expressions applied by St. Paul to "describe the omnipotence which God exerts in "us?" "The eyes of your understanding being "enlightened, that ye may know what is the "exceeding greatness of his power to usward "who believe, according to the working of his "almighty power."...."To assert that the power "of God working in us differs not from the or-"dinary powers of man,—is not this to extenuate "the almighty energy of God, and almost to "reduce it to nothing*?"

The "comfort" in which the Holy Spirit enables his people "to rejoice," is "*holy* comfort." It is holy in its source, and in its tendency; and hereby it may easily be distinguished from the reveries of imagination, from the flights of enthusiasm, and from the more odious pretensions of designing falsehood. If a hatred of sin be excited, and a desire after conformity to God be kindled in the soul—if a resolution of resisting temptation, of practising self-denial, and of obeying all the will of God as it is revealed to us, be formed within us—if humility be deepened and spirituality promoted, while we are enabled to embrace the hope of the Gospel so as to be "filled with "all joy and peace in believing;" then we need

* Turretin, quoted by Mr. Knox in his Christian Philosophy, p. 161.

not to be apprehensive of delusion in our consolations, nor doubt whether they are derived from God the Holy Ghost. The effects of fancy bear no resembance of these sanctifying consequences which always result from divine communications.

We pray for the perpetuity of joy and peace in believing; that we may evermore rejoice in the holy comfort of God the Holy Ghost. The fountain is inexhaustible. The death of Christ for sin is a full atonement—his righteousness an impregnable basis of hope. The promises of God are "all yea in him, and in him amen,"—subject to no change. But we are mutable creatures, exposed to temptations, liable to the influence of unbelief, and in danger of being seduced or frightened from "the fountain of living waters." "If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious," we long for more than a mere taste, dread a deprivation of our comforts, and unite heartily in praying that we may be enabled "evermore to "rejoice in them."

We must not omit to observe that the glorious doctrine of the Trinity is sweetly recognised in the conclusion of our collect, though it is so very concise. Indeed it cannot be recalled to mind nor avowed too often, for it is the hinge on which our salvation, both in its execution and application, turns. If Jesus be not Jehovah, our hope in his blood is vain; we are yet in our sins. If his Spirit be not "with him and the Father, "one God, world without end," our expectation of enlightening, converting, comforting, sanctifying, and persevering grace, is unfounded. For no power short of omnipotence can prepare the fallen soul for the heavenly inheritance and the vision of God.

Let the reader inquire whether he be conscious

of any divine illumination which has been shed on his mind, or of any comfort which he has derived from the Gospel through the power of the Holy Ghost. Or, if this be a doubtful matter, let him ask himself, Do I feel the absolute need of these blessings, and is my prayer for them, while I unite my voice with that of the Christian church, the language of sincerity? If he suppose that he is made a partaker of the grace which God the Holy Ghost communicates, let him bring that supposition to the test of Scripture, and see whether his consolations bear the marks of a divine origin. If they came from God, they lead to him. If God be the Author of them, they are "holy comforts;" they sanctify, while they refresh. It is "through sanctification of the "Spirit and belief of the truth" that present peace is enjoyed, and a meetness for everlasting life attained.

ROYAL ASIATIC BOMB. BR. AN. OF TH.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowlege the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine Majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

" In the ancient liturgies we find that this day " was looked upon only as an Octave of Pentecost, " the observation of it as the feast of the Trinity " being of a later date: for since the praises of the " Trinity were every day celebrated in the doxo- " logy, hymns, and creeds, therefore the church " thought there was no need to set apart one par- " ticular day for that which was done on each. " But afterwards, when the Arians, and such like " heretics, were spread over the world, and had " vented their blasphemies against this divine mys- " tery, the wisdom of the church thought it conve- " nient, that, though the blessed Trinity was daily " commemorated in its public offices of devotion, " yet it should be the more solemn subject of one " particular day's meditation. So that from the " time of Pope Alexander III. if not before, the " festival of the Holy Trinity was observed in " some churches on the Sunday after Pentecost, in " others, on the Sunday next before Advent; until

" in the year 1305 it was made an established " feast, as it stands in our present Calendar*."

The day thus chosen for the celebration of the glory which is due to the Triune Jehovah seems peculiarly proper. For as on the foregoing festivals each person in the Godhead has been acknowledged to be God and Lord, and as by the teaching of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost " a " right judgment in all things" was conferred on the church, and particularly in this important doctrine, it seems to be congruous with propriety that the day on which the Trinity in Unity is adored with special regard, should follow those on which the Son and Holy Ghost have been particularly honoured and the descent of the Spirit is celebrated.

But though the festival of the Holy Trinity is, comparatively with the other festivals of our church, of a modern date, we are not to suppose that the doctrine which it recognises is modern, or that the worship which it requires was unknown to the primitive church. These we can clearly trace to the time of the Apostles, and sanction by their paramount authority. Nay, we can justify our practice by that of a church which is subject to no errors, in whose services there are no flaws. For among the innumerable company of angels, and the church of glorified saints, as we shall presently see, the glory of the eternal Trinity is acknowledged, and the Unity worshipped.

The practice of the Christian church in the Apostolic age, when men full of the Holy Ghost conducted her worship, may be gathered from the Acts of the Apostles, their Epistles, and the Revelation of St. John. And though no public

* Wheatly, p. 224, Oxford edition.

liturgy of that early era hath been preserved, at least none that can be absolutely proved to have been composed during the Apostolic period (though there are several which the testimony of high antiquity ascribes to it), yet the evidence on record is all-sufficient for our purpose. To a believer in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures (and in this argument we have nothing to do with Deists) the testimony or practice of one man, declared to be taught and led by the Spirit of God will be equivalent to the testimony or practice of the whole church, since the former could no more be deceived than the latter.

"For the first age the Scripture is sufficient "evidence of the Christian practice. For, not "to insist on the precept of honouring the Son as "they honoured the Father; or the form of bap- "tism in which they are commanded to join the "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in one act of "worship; or the injunction to believe in the "Son as they believed in the Father; with "many other acts of internal worship peculiar to "God alone: I only argue from their example "and practice. St. Stephen the protomartyr, "when he was sealing his confession with his "blood, breathed out his last breath in a prayer "to Christ, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;' and "'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' (Acts "vii. 59.) St. Paul professes he never baptized "any but in the name of Christ. (1 Cor. i. 13.) "And his common forms of blessing were with "invocation of the name of Christ:—'Grace be "'to you, and peace, from God the Father and "'from our Lord Jesus Christ.' And, 'The "'grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love "'God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, "'be with you all;' as the solemn forms run

" almost in all his epistles, both in the beginning " and the conclusion of them. Nay, so common " was this practice, that among other titles of " the believers, at their first rise and appearance " in the world, they were distinguished by the " character of those that called on the name of " Christ*. (Acts ix. 14. 21; 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Tim. " ii. 22.) Many other such like evidences are " obvious to any one that reads the New Testa- " ment. I only add that of the Revelation " (chap. v. 8–14) where the church in heaven " and earth together is represented as offering " both prayers and hymns to Christ. (See also, " chap. vii. 9, 10.)

" We have here seen the model of the worship " of Christ (and of the Holy Ghost) as begun and " settled in the practice of the church in the first " age. And we shall find it continued in the " same manner in those that followed immediately " after. For Pliny, who lived in the beginning " of the second century, and as a judge under " Trajan, took the confessions of some revolting " Christians, says, they declared to him they " were used to meet on a certain day before it " was light, and among other parts of their wor- " ship sing a hymn to Christ as to their God. " Which is a plain indication of their worship of " Christ on the Lord's day. Not long after this " lived Polycarp, who joins God the Father and the " Son together in his prayers for grace and bene- " diction upon men:—' The God and Father of " ' our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ him- " ' self, the eternal High Priest, the Son of God, " ' build you up in faith and truth, &c. and give " ' you a lot and part among the saints, and to

* Επικαλημενους το ονομα Χριστυ.

" ' us with you, and to all them that are under
" ' heaven who shall believe in Jesus Christ our
" ' Lord and in his Father who raised him from
" ' the dead.' And so he begins his epistle,
" ' Mercy and peace from God Almighty, and
" ' from the Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied unto
" ' you.' And when he came to his martyrdom,
" he made a prayer to God at the stake, before
" he was burnt, concluding it with this doxology
" to the whole Trinity:—' I bless thee, I praise
" ' thee, I glorify thee for all things, together
" ' with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ,
" ' thy beloved Son, with whom unto thee and
" ' the Holy Spirit, be glory both now and for
" ever, world without end. Amen.'

" When Polycarp was dead, the church of
" Smyrna wrote a circular epistle to other
" churches, to give an account of his sufferings,
" wherein they relate this remarkable occurrence,
" —That as soon as he was dead, the Jews sug-
" gested to the heathen judge, that he should
" not suffer the Christians to take Polycarp's
" body to bury it, lest they should leave their
" crucified Master and begin to worship this
" other, ' Not considering,' says the epistle, ' that
" ' we can never either forsake the worship of
" ' Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all
" ' those who are saved in the whole world, the
" ' just for the unjust; or worship any other.
" ' For we worship him as being the Son of God;
" ' but the martyrs we only love as they deserve
" ' for their great affection to their King and
" ' Master, and as being disciples and followers
" ' of their Lord, whose partners and fellow
" ' disciples we desire to be.' This is an unan-
" swerable testimony to prove both the divine

" worship of Christ, as the true Son of God, and " that no martyr or other saint was worshipped " in those days. Not long after this lived Justin " Martyr, who in his second apology, to wipe off " the charge of atheism brought against them " by the heathens, who objected to them, ' that " ' they had cast off the worship of God,' answers, " ' that they worshipped the God of righteous- " ' ness, and his Son, as also the Holy Spirit of " ' prophecy.' And he tells the emperor a little " after, that ' they held it unlawful to worship " ' any but God alone.' Therefore in their " practice they also shewed their belief of the " true divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost; since " they worshipped them only upon this founda- " tion and supposition, that they are truly God; " and to have done it upon any other supposition " had been gross idolatry by their own confession. " Which I wish were duly considered by those " who now write against the divinity of Christ, " (and of his Spirit) and absurdly pretend that " all the fathers of the three first ages were of " their opinion. For this is only to make them " guilty of the grossest idolatry, and involve them " in a monstrous contradiction; whilst they pre- " tend to worship none but God alone, and yet " gave divine honour to one, whom (if our mo- " dern representers say true) they did not believe " to be God by nature, but only a creature."

To these testimonies from writers of the second century might be added those of Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, the heathen Lucian, Irenæus, Theophilus bishop of Antioch, and others, for the purpose of proving that " the Trinity in Unity " ought to be worshipped," if the primitive church, deriving their opinions immediately from

the Apostles, is to be credited, or its practice to be followed*. For brevity's sake we shall only subjoin from Clemens Alexandrinus the following doxology to the whole Trinity:—"Let us give "thanks to the only Father and Son, to the Son "and the Father, to the Son our teacher and "master, with the Holy Spirit; one in all re-"spects; in whom are all things; by whom all "things are one; by whom is eternal existence; "whose members we are; whose is the glory, "and the ages; who is the perfect good, the "perfect beauty, all wise, and all just: to whom "be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

We have opened our meditations on the collect for Trinity Sunday with the foregoing extracts (the importance of which will be a sufficient apology for their length) for the purpose of shewing the unison of our church with the apostolic model in her worship of Three Persons in one Jehovah. Our collect contains—an act of devout thanksgiving for the orthodoxy of the creed which we profess—and an act of fervent supplication for persevering grace, that we may "hold fast the profession of our faith without "wavering."

What grandeur and sublimity are observable in the humiliating questions which Zophar proposed to Job! (chap. xi. 7–9.) "Canst thou "by searching find out God? Canst thou find "out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high "as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than "hell, what canst thou know? the measure

* These may be found in Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, from whence the above extracts are made. He has carried the inquiry through the three first centuries.—Book ix. chap. 2.

" thereof is longer than the earth, and broader " than the sea."

" Wouldst thou th' Eternal with thy line explore?
" Fathom almighty thought, and find its shore?
" Go, mete heav'n's height, the depth of Hades sound,
" Span the wide earth, and reach o'er ocean's bound."

If the ways of God are beyond our reach and past finding out, how much more himself! Surely then it becomes us, in the contemplation of the awful subject now before us, to move with fear and trembling—to think and write, to hear and read, with deep humility and an entire submission of our understandings to the decisions of the word of God. If Nadab and Abihu were struck dead by fire from heaven for offering unhallowed fire before the Lord; if fifty thousand threescore and ten men of Bethshemesh were smitten for looking into the ark of God; if Uzza lost his life for his temerity in touching it with his hand; if Ananias and Sapphira were suddenly cut off from the land of the living for lying to the Holy Ghost,—with what reverential awe and deep solemnity should a poor worm speak of and read the doctrine of Revelation concerning this Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God! If Moses was hid in the cleft of the rock while the Lord disclosed a glimpse of his glory; if Isaiah cried, " Woe is me," when the Triune God condescended to reveal himself to view; if Daniel, when he saw the vision of Jehovah, fell into a swoon, as one dead; and if beloved John dropped senseless at the feet of Jesus, when he saw his glory,—with what lowly sensibilities of heart should we search the Scriptures, that we may know and worship aright this great and glorious Being! May we be enabled to " cry after knowledge,

" and to lift up our voice for understanding;
" may we seek her as silver, and search for her
" as for hid treasures; that we may understand
" the fear of JEHOVAH, and find the knowledge
" of the ALEIM!"

The act of thanksgiving in which our collect engages us has relation to the revelation which God hath made of himself in his word, and which, as members of the church of England, we profess to believe and to avow in our public adorations of his divine Majesty. And oh, that, while " by the confession of a true faith we " acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, " and in the power of the divine Majesty wor- " ship the Unity," we may be found not only orthodox in sentiment but also sound in heart! for it is to be remembered that a man may be a Trinitarian in his judgment, and yet derive no real advantage from his creed. The devils are orthodox, for " they believe, and tremble." If the doctrine be not only admitted as true, but also cordially embraced in its bearings and relations as connected with redemption, then we shall prove indeed that " the knowledge of the " HOLY ONES is understanding," and that it is " life eternal to know the only true God, and " Jesus Christ whom he hath sent."

Our collect takes it for granted, that the confession of faith which is made in the creeds of our church is " the confession of a true faith." For the doctrine of the TRINITY in UNITY is not a matter of " doubtful disputation " among us, but it is a certain fundamental truth which we deem essential to salvation. And therefore we consider ourselves to be performing an act of Christian charity, while, in the strong language of the Athanasian creed, we declare the necessity

of maintaining the catholic faith on this momentous point, under the penalty of everlasting destruction to him who perverts or abandons it. We can admit no man into our bosoms as a Christian and a fellow-heir of the grace of life, who denies it; for as the existence of God is the foundation-stone of all religion, so is the Triune distinction in the Godhead the foundation-stone of the Christian religion. Remove it, and the whole fabric of Christianity falls. For both the grand characteristics of the Bible, by which Christianity is distinguished from Deism, depend on this basis—the doctrine of vicarious atonement resting on the Godhead of Christ, and the doctrine of divine influence on the Godhead of the Holy Ghost.

The confession which we make is contained in our creeds, wherein we assert the existence, co-equality and co-eternity of Three divine Persons in one Jehovah. We do not pretend to explain the mystery of the Trinity in Unity; but we receive the doctrine on the authority of the Scriptures, wherein we find it plainly and repeatedly asserted. We perceive its inseparable connexion with the scheme of redemption on which our hopes of salvation are built, and therefore feel our own eternal interests involved in it. We view it as an object proposed to our faith for the comfort of our souls, and not to our reason for examination and explanation. We acknowledge it to be far above the reach of our puny powers; but we can perceive no disgrace reflected on a finite understanding by a supposition that it is incapable of comprehending an infinite object. But although this mysterious doctrine be above the reach of reason, we can perceive therein no contradiction to its dictates. We think it

highly reasonable that God, and God only, should give an account of his own mode of subsistence. The tenant of the molehill can form no competent idea of man; and much less can man, by the power of his own mind, form any adequate notions of God.

As these pages are designed for those persons who, as members of our church, "by the confession of a true faith acknowledge the glory of "the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine "Majesty worship the Unity," we shall suppose them to be sincere in the declarations which they make, and that it is unnecessary to enter on a formal demonstration of the conformity which prevails between the creed of the church of England and the oracles of God on this fundamental article of faith*. It may not, however, be amiss to observe, for the comfort and establishment of true believers, that on this, as on every other important doctrine of the Gospel, "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." This evidence is "hidden from the wise and "prudent, and revealed unto babes." In his convictions of sin, the conversion of his heart, the peace of his conscience, the hope of his soul, the elevation of his affections heavenwards, and the bias of his will to holiness, the Christian believer has a body of evidence that the atoning Saviour and the sanctifying Spirit are true and very God, which no sophistry can undermine or weaken. He has been enabled to submit to the revealed will of God, and thereby has been ena-

* If the reader should wish to be furnished with armour, either offensive or defensive, relating to the Trinitarian creed, he will find in Jones's Catholic Doctrine of a Trinity, both a shield and a sword, which the enemies of truth will not be able to penetrate or resist.

bled to ascertain that the doctrines of the Bible are true, according to our Lord's declaration, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of "the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether "I speak of myself."

Our collect teaches us to ascribe the acknowledgment which we make to the grace of God. And the propriety of so doing is evident. For the revelation which God hath made of himself in the Bible is an act of gratuitous favour; and without it we could have known nothing of God. The creed of the Polytheist, the Deist, or the atheist, would have been ours also. Reason, in its present impaired state, would never, by any deductions of its own, have led us up to a first cause; and much less could it have determined the unity of that first cause, or the mode of his subsistence. O what a blessing is the precious Bible! without it futurity could have presented nothing to the mind but "the black-"ness of darkness for ever." And in subservience to the Bible, O how great a blessing is the sound and scriptural liturgy of our church! Surely we owe to God unfeigned and everlasting gratitude for the orthodoxy of sentiment in which we have been educated, and which from our infancy hath been inculcated on our minds. The derivation of a true faith from the apostolic fountain, and its continuance in use by our church, are inestimable instances of divine mercy to us who inhabit this land. For it has not been through any neglect of the enemy in sowing tares over the field of the visible church, since at one period Arianism had nearly overspread all Christendom; and having the sword of civil as well as of ecclesiastical authority in its hand, it persecuted the true disciples of Jesus,

with nearly as great bitterness as Polytheism had done before. And even in our own era and in our own land, uncommon exertions have been made, and are still continued, for the purpose of subverting "the faith once delivered to "the saints." But, blessed be God, the effects of infidelity have hitherto failed of success; and we may justly consider the liturgy of our church as being, under God, and in subordination to his word, the strongest bulwark against its furious assaults.

But I trust that the reader of these pages has not only received the "true faith" from his forefathers, as a system to be credited, but that he also feels the power and comfort of it in his own soul. If he have received the testimony of the Three co-equal witnesses that bear witness in heaven; if he have cordially embraced "the "testimony, that God hath given to us eternal "life, and that this life is in his Son;" then he sees the propriety of thanking God not only for an external revelation in his word, but also for internal light and comfort shed on his mind by God the Spirit. For he knows that "no man "can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the "Holy Ghost."

The prayer which follows the act of adoration and thanksgiving which we have reviewed is two-fold. For we implore divine conservation in the true faith, and a defence from all those adversities to which a profession of it may expose us.

We beseech God to "keep us stedfast in the "faith" of the Trinity which we avow. For as we deem it to be essential to the enjoyment of all comfort here and to everlasting salvation, our perseverance in it is a matter of high importance.

Thereon depends the peace of our consciences, the holiness of our hearts and lives, and our admission at last into God's everlasting kingdom.

It is supposed in this petition that our stedfastness in the faith will be tried. And indeed it is "the trial of our faith, which being much "more precious than of gold that perisheth, "though it be tried with fire, shall be found "unto praise and honour and glory at the ap-"pearing of Jesus Christ." The subtilty of Satan, the sophistry of men, and the pride and unbelief of our own hearts, will bring our stedfastness to a severe test, which nothing but the sustaining power of almighty grace can enable us to withstand. And besides these internal conflicts, which all may expect to endure in a greater or less degree, we know not to what outward tribulation the profession of a true faith may expose us, if the prediction of a late heresiarch should be verified, and the train of gunpowder which he tells us has been laid with so much industry should make an explosion, and bury both church and state in ruins. This dreadful catastrophe may God in his mercy avert from us! However this be, it is certain that without persevering and establishing grace continually communicated to us, we shall be in danger of wavering in our profession, and even of abandoning our creed. That man does not know the force of temptation, the sophistry of infidelity, nor the pride and treachery of his own fallen heart, who is not conscious of his danger, and who doth not discern clearly the necessity of crying to the strong for strength that he may be "kept stedfast in the faith."

In the use of this petition we implore grace, not only that we may be preserved in the out-

ward and unremitted profession of sound doctrine, but also in the inward experience and enjoyment of it. The doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, as connected with redemption, is the ground of all spiritual comfort, and the motive to all evangelical holiness; so that on the stedfastness of the mind in the belief of it depend our consolations and our hopes, our energies and unremitted acts of obedience. We pray, therefore, that we may be enabled so to believe in the Deity of Christ and of his Spirit, that we may derive from that belief the comfort which it affords, and the sanctification which it produces. If our views of the dignity which belongs to the person of Christ be at any time clouded, the validity of his atonement will proportionally become suspicious, the efficacy of his death appear to be doubtful, and the prevalency of his intercession be called in question. If the glory of the Spirit's Godhead be obscured, we can have no confidence that the work of grace will ever be accomplished, that sin will be eradicated from our hearts, and our souls be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. We shall then fear the power of our enemies; and if the doubt become predominant, shall either fall back into indifference and the spirit of the world, or sink into despair. Faith in the doctrine of the Trinity is the very sinew of godliness. Without it, spirituality of mind, victory over the world, peace of conscience, and a good hope in death, are impossibilities. O how needful then is the petition of our collect that we may be kept stedfast in this faith! A dereliction of this would be apostacy from God and from Christianity; it would leave us under the guilt of our sins and the curse of the law, with

all the "additional criminality of having tram-"pled under foot the Son of God, and done "despite to the Spirit of grace."

We proceed to pray for defence from all adversities. This is added with great propriety; for a confession of a true faith will expose us to adversities. In the early ages of Christianity its confessors were exposed to all manner of outward adversities. They "had trials of cruel "mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of "bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, "they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were "slain with the sword; they wandered about in "sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, "afflicted, tormented." And though, through the merciful providence of God, we are at present free from the danger of imprisonment or death for an avowal of the truth; yet "all who "will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer per-"secution." The siftings of Satan, the sneers of the world, and the raging of corruption, are adversities from which none are exempt; and the bitterness of which the heart that endures them only knows, and from which God only can defend us. The confessor of a true faith is enlisted as a soldier, and must fight the good fight, finish his course, and keep the faith, ere he can wear the crown of righteousness. "But "God is faithful, who will not suffer" those who lean on his protection "to be tempted above "that they are able, but will with the tempta-"tion also make a way to escape, that they may "be able to bear it." And while we "believe "in God the Father, who made us and all the "world," as our reconciled Father, our "al-"mighty and everlasting God;" — while we "believe in God the Son, who redeemed us

"and all mankind," as our "almighty and "everlasting God" and Saviour,—and "in God "the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth the elect "people of God," as our sanctifier and comforter; — we have a hope that maketh not ashamed, a ground of confidence of which we may boast before men and devils. For our Triune God "liveth and reigneth world without "end. Amen."

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please thee both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the fifteenth chapter of St. John's gospel our Lord illustrates by a beautiful parable the nature, necessity, and effects of that mystical union which subsists between himself and all those who believe on his name. The drift of his parable is plainly expounded, and the scope of his discourse brought to a point, in the fifth verse, where he says, "Without me ye can do "nothing."

On this declaration of our blessed Lord, our collect for the First Sunday after Trinity seems to be founded. It contains—an act of adoration, appropriate to the subject of the prayer which follows it—an act of supplication for a favourable audience of our prayers—a confession of personal helplessness—and a petition for grace, specifying the end for which it is implored.

The design of that act of adoration with which our collect opens, is two-fold,—the promotion of God's glory, and the encouragement of our own souls in the arduous work of prayer to

which we are about to address ourselves by the consideration which is suggested. Blessed be God, that these two objects may be combined! For his glory might have been secured, while our souls were left a prey to despair. But the scheme of redemption has rendered the glory of God compatible with our comfort; nay, it has so united the salvation of his people with his own honour that they cannot be put asunder. In Christ Jesus "mercy and truth are met "together, righteousness and peace have kissed "each other."

The glorification of his own great name, or the display of his own adorable perfections, is, and must ever be, the grand aim and supreme end of all the works of God. And as redemption is the chief of all his works, the stupendous object which from eternity occupied the divine mind, as it is the main building to which creation and providence are to be considered only as a scaffolding; God expects to derive from this principal work of his hands a larger income of glory than from all his other operations. The just claim which God makes of all the honour resulting from the scheme of salvation should be continually in our remembrance. And as his gracious design with respect to ourselves is only so far promoted as we are induced and constrained to ascribe our whole salvation to him, we should be very watchful against the pride of our own fallen hearts, against the self-righteousness and the self-sufficiency which are natural to us, and from which, in a greater or less degree, the most humble are not exempt. To employ our lips as monitors and remembrancers of our forgetful hearts is the part of wisdom. And this we do in the preface of our present

collect. And this solemn act of adoration in which we now engage will be prolonged by the church of the redeemed to all eternity; when "the voice of many angels round about the "throne, and the beasts, and the elders, (the "number of whom will be ten thousand times "ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,) "shall be heard, saying with a loud voice," (and oh, that our voices may be mingled with theirs!) "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain "to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and "*strength*, and honour, and glory, and blessing." If God has bestowed his grace on us, we shall ascribe glory to him; and as we ascribe to him the glory of his own grace, he will confer more upon us.

Our own encouragement in the arduous work of prayer is another object proposed in the preface of our collect. The work of prayer may truly be called an arduous work, when it is considered as an exercise of faith in God's promises, and an emanation of desire after spiritual blessings. For to believe the promises of God so as to expect their accomplishment, under conviction of sin and a consciousness of guilt, is difficult indeed. And so great is the natural torpor and carnality of our affections, that the exertion of spiritual desire is not more easy. If prayer consisted in the recital of words, there would be no need of seeking encouragement in its performance. But if it chiefly consist in spiritual hunger and thirst, and if motives thereto can only be derived from the gratuitous mercy of God, the necessity of having recourse to every mean of encouragement which is afforded us must be evident to the true supplicant.

We approach the throne of grace for the pur-

pose of imploring "strength." And we enliven our hopes of success by considering that "God" is "the strength of all them that put their trust "in him." He hath engaged in the faithful promises of his word to "give strength to his "people," to be "a strength to the poor, a "strength to the needy in his distress." He hath proved himself faithful to these promises in the experience of all who have ever trusted in him, and he is "the same yesterday, and to-day, "and for ever." "In the Lord Jehovah is ever-"lasting strength;" and the common boast of his people hath been, under every circumstance of trial and of personal weakness and unworthiness, "in the Lord have I righteousness and "strength."

It may be asked, What do we ascribe to God when we address him as "the strength of all "them who put their trust in him?" This question may be answered by the proposal of another; for what purposes do those "that trust "in him" want "strength?" Are they surrounded by temptations which of themselves they are unable to resist? Are they the subjects of corruption which they are unable to mortify? Are they exposed to trials which they are unable to bear? Are they engaged in multifarious duties which they are unable to perform? Have they a long and difficult course to run in which they cannot persevere by any exertion of personal ability? For all these and a thousand other subordinate purposes which might be mentioned, the Christian believer needs extrinsical strength. And what he needs, in all its extent, is to be found in God and to be derived from him. They "who wait upon the Lord shall "renew their strength; they shall mount up with

"wings as eagles, they shall run and not be "weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

But who are those persons that may expect to derive strength from God, its only and inexhaustible source? The character of those favoured persons is drawn in our collect. "All who put "their trust in him" are entitled by his gracious promises to expect from him all-sufficient help. Faith, consisting in self-renunciation and a reliance on his grace, is that divine principle which gives to fallen man an interest in the promises, enables him to plead them, and qualifies him for receiving promised blessings. It qualifies him for receiving them, not by implanting in his soul inherent worthiness, nor by furnishing him with any plea of personal merit; but by emptying him of his own wisdom, righteousness, and strength, it prepares him for giving a welcome to needful benefits as freely bestowed "without "money and without price." Our natural faculties are all like to the withered arm of the man who applied to our Lord for help. They are rendered by our fall utterly useless in any spiritual act that is required of us. But faith draws virtue from Omnipotence. It credits the promise of God; and, as it opens a communication between Omnipotence and the soul, the soul is endued with new vigour, and enabled for the performance of those spiritual acts which are the proofs of justification and a preparation for glory.

In the recital of the collect before us, those who adopt it profess to "put their trust in God." But do we indeed rely exclusively on him? Let us scrutinise the sensibilities of our bosoms. Let us examine the habitual frame of our hearts. Let us inquire, On what our hope of acceptance with God is founded, whether on divine mercy

or personal merit, remembering that the one or the other, exclusively, must be the basis of our confidence, and that no coalition can be formed between them. And let us inquire further, to what source we look for ability to perform the will of God; whether to divine grace, or to personal and inherent strength; remembering that, in this view also, self-confidence cannot be confounded with trust in God. But there is yet a further subject of inquiry. Have we formed any stedfast purpose of doing the will of God? Do we see the necessity of a conformity thereto? Are we at all anxious about salvation? If no such purpose is formed, no such necessity discerned, and no such anxiety felt, we are totally uninterested in the employment of the church, and have no part nor lot with her. We are, in this case, "dead in trespasses and sins," and our outward acts of worship are the unmeaning acts of an automaton, and abominable in the sight of God, the searcher of hearts.

Having joined in a solemn act of adoration, we proceed to implore a favourable audience to our prayers, pleading divine mercy as the only basis for our expectation of success. The "prayers" which we beseech God "mercifully" to "hear," include both those which we have already offered, and those which we are about to offer. In this petition we, in effect, smite individually on our breast, crying, "God be "merciful to me a sinner." The requests which we make are of the highest importance; since, on the alternative of their being granted or refused, depends no less than our eternal salvation or damnation. But what plea shall we urge for the purpose of conciliating divine favour? We have looked all around us. We have searched

narrowly every corner of our hearts and every act of our lives in order to discover if any thing personal can furnish us with an argument which may be efficaciously addressed to him, from whom alone what we want can be derived. But we can find nothing. On the contrary, the further we carry our inquiry, the more we discover that it is hostile to our wishes and destructive to our hopes. Sin, in a thousand shapes, constitutes the sum total of the discovery in which our search has issued. What then shall we do? We must obtain help or perish.—We do that which necessity dictates, which wisdom approves, which the word of God warrants: we cast ourselves on divine mercy, and cry, Lord, "mercifully "hear our prayers." Such is the genuine spirit of this petition. But, alas, how many recite it, who feel neither the pressure of want, nor the earnestness of desire for relief; who are unconscious of personal unworthiness, and whose appeal to mercy is a solemn mockery of God and of his grace! Many who rehearse our collect, or add their "*Amen*" at the close of it, (we have reason to fear) are indifferent about "pleasing God "either in will or deed;" have no sense of their own impotency, and therefore perceive no need of "the help of his grace."

In the short but comprehensive confession which follows, we acknowledge that "by reason "of the frailty of our mortal nature we can do "good thing without God." Oh, that all who repeat this, felt the force and extent of their own words! The language which they are taught to use is certainly the language of truth and soberness; for he who cannot err hath said, "Without me ye can do nothing," nothing that is good. But have we weighed the import of

our own confession? Are we convinced of its agreement with truth? Do we estimate duly the importance of it?

For the purpose of ascertaining the truth of this confession, let us inquire what is our natural state; for of that our collect speaks. What, then, is the state of man by nature? Let our Lord reply to the question:—"That which is "born of the flesh, is flesh." Our first parents having corrupted themselves, their descendants to the latest generations are necessarily corrupt also; for water must partake of the qualities which are inherent in the fountain from which it issues. But is this corruption universal? Does it pervade the whole man, soul and body, and all the faculties of both, so as to exclude every spark of goodness? Let St. Paul reply:—"In me, "that is in my flesh" or natural man, "dwelleth "no good thing." "Man, of his own nature, is "fleshly and carnal, corrupt, naught, sinful, and "disobedient to God; without any spark of "goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly "motions, only given to evil thoughts and wicked "deeds. As for the marks of the Spirit, the "fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, if "he have any at all in him, they proceed only "of the Holy Ghost, who is the only worker of "our sanctification, and maketh us new men in "Christ Jesus*."

It is further to be remarked that, according to our collect, even after the grace of regeneration, which those who recite it are supposed to have received, we are still dependent on further communications of grace for the power both to will and do that which is pleasing to God. "The

* Homily for Whitsunday.

"frailty of our mortal nature," the spiritual debility which corruption remaining in our bodies produces (which bodies are subject to death on account of sin, and which death only will free from corruption) is such as to oppress the seed of immortal life, and impede all the spiritual activities of the new man, and thereby disable us for the performance of any good without the continual aid of almighty grace. "The flesh "lusteth against the Spirit, so that we cannot do "the things that we would;" and even the inclination to good is itself maintained by a divine agency. A branch separated from the tree has no life, or fructifying virtue in itself, nor any means of deriving it to itself from an extrinsical source. In like manner, we have no spiritual life in ourselves. The Spirit of God is that to the soul which the soul is to the body. The body has its members, but can exert none of them without the soul. The soul also has its natural faculties, but it can make no spiritual use of them without divine influence. We cannot repent, believe, or obey, without supernatural energy continually derived from God.

Now let us inquire, if we are sincere in making the acknowledgment, "that by reason of the "frailty of our mortal nature we can do no good "thing without God," not even so much as think a good thought? Are we honest members of the church of England, which puts this confession into the mouths of all her children? If we are, then we cultivate in ourselves a spirit of humility, faith, and prayer. We desire to engage in no act of duty without a recurrence to God for "the "help of his grace." "Lord, help me," is the habitual cry of our hearts. But may we indulge a charitable hope that this humble and depen-

dent state of mind generally prevails among the professed members of our church? Are not many of them like beggars, who assume at times the tattered garb of mendicity, the semblance of cripples, and the tone of importunate entreaty, for the purpose of deception, while they are unconscious of any real wants or infirmities? If you listen to their language at church, you would believe them to be, in their own estimation, "poor and miserable and wretched and blind "and naked;" while it is plain, both from their avowed sentiments and general conduct, that they deem themselves to be "rich and increased "in goods, and to have need of nothing."

The humble confession of our collect is followed by a petition for "the help of God's "grace;" that is, for a communication of divine influence to the soul, diffusing light through the mind, love through the heart, and energy through all the affections. We shall determine what "the help" which is implored means, while we consider the end for which it is implored.

The end for which "the help of God's grace" is here besought is a very important one. It is, "that in keeping his commandments we may "please him both in will and deed." Can any object proposed to the mind be more momentous? Is there any thing more likely to excite the desires and energies of the soul? Surely not, were not our minds blinded by unbelief, and "tied and bound with the chain of our sins."

It is supposed that those who use our collect are earnestly solicitous to "please God both in "will and deed by keeping his commandments." Doth the reader's conscience bear witness that such a desire is predominant within him? It is felt only by those who "love much, because

"much hath been forgiven them." The believing sinner only, who has "tasted that the Lord is "gracious," is conscious of this holy solicitude. For others, if they will speak the truth, must own that a repugnance to the will of God reigns in their bosoms, and that their carnal minds are "enmity against God." They are indifferent to his approbation, except indeed so far as they are influenced by a fear of punishment. To divine love they are utter strangers. A "testimony "that they please God" is by no means necessary to their happiness, for they are seeking it in self-gratification and the applause of the world; and therefore they go on, from day to day, without any inquiry whether they please God or not. But the genuine members of our church ardently long to please God, "both in will and deed," by an unreserved, universal, and cordial obedience to his commandments. To "walk worthy of the "Lord unto all pleasing" is the holy ambition of their regenerate souls.

That we cannot keep God's commandments, so as to please him either in will or deed, without the help of his grace, is well known to all who are taught of God and are seeking to be conformed to his holy law. They know that they are crippled in all their faculties; that all their powers are palsied in consequence of the fall. God commands us to repent; and it is certain that we cannot please him without an habitual spirit of penitence. But is the exercise of repentance in our own power? No; it is declared to be the gift of Christ, who is "exalted to be a "Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and "remission of sin." "Turn thou us unto thyself, "O Lord, and we shall be turned," is therefore a suitable prayer for our use. We are also

required to believe the Gospel; for this "is God's "commandment," emphatically so called, "that "we should believe in the name of his Son "Jesus Christ:" and it is certain that "without "faith it is impossible to please God." But faith, both in its rise and progress, is "of the "operation of God." "It is given us to believe," if we do indeed believe the Gospel of Christ. Obedience to God's will, as it is revealed in his holy law, is also our duty, and is essential to a state of communion with him, as the effect of faith and the evidence of acceptance. But "the "way of man is not in himself; it is not in man "that walketh to direct his steps" aright. God must "work in us both to will and to do of his "good pleasure."

It is to be observed that a genuine Christian is not contented with "the form" without "the "power of godliness,"—with exterior decency and morality without interior rectitude of heart; for he implores the help of God's "grace that he "may please him both *in will and deed*." And it is further observable that he puts the will before the deed, well knowing that no action can be approved by God which does not proceed from love to his name and zeal for his glory. Many actions may be formally good, which are essentially bad; as, for instance, a man may "give "all his goods to feed the poor and his body to "be burned," and yet be destitute of charity or love to God. The law of God is spiritual, and extends to motives as well as acts. "Thou shalt "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and "with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and "with all thy strength."

O what need has every reader to pray for the help of God's grace, when he considers, not only

the defects of his practice, but also the remaining obliquity of his will! The conscious sinner will join heartily in the petition of our collect. But, alas, how many persons, who unite in our service and adopt our forms, have no desire to please God! If they pay any respect to God's commandments, it is only to such an extent as they suppose to be absolutely necessary for the purpose of avoiding punishment. The motive of their spiritless and unconnected duties is fear and not love. And hence their obedience (if the name may be prostituted by an application to such a tissue of folly) is partial and limited. O fatal mistake, to suppose that the reluctant duties which terror imposes can be acceptable to God! Till the will be renewed, no attempts to obey the law of God can please him. Conversion of heart is essential to salvation. For nothing else can qualify us for the service of God on earth, or for his presence in heaven.

It may be asked, Is it possible for a believer, in the present state of imperfection, to "walk "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing?" A Christian will aim at it; and under the influence of desire to accomplish it, he will pray earnestly for "the help of God's grace." And while he thus proves his sincerity, his earnest endeavour will please God "through Jesus Christ our Lord," whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and the mantle of whose righteousness covers all the defects which the eye of infinite purity must discover in human obedience. It is our comfort to be assured that, "if any man sin, we have an advocate with "the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he "is the propitiation for our sins."

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

O Lord, who never failest to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy stedfast fear and love; keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GODLINESS is a supreme and habitual regard to God in the heart and life. It consists of many branches; for "our duty towards God is "to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him, "with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, "to worship him, to give him thanks, to put our "whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour "his holy name and his word, and to serve him "truly all the days of our lives." Each of these characteristic qualities of the godly soul implies the others, for neither of them can exist in solitude and without the rest. They are therefore used, in Scripture singly and separately as descriptive of the people of God, sometimes one and sometimes another being adopted.

In our collect two of these distinctive properties of the saints are introduced. They are described as fearing and loving God. If the reader be of the number, he may confidently say with the Psalmist, "The Lord is my Shepherd, "therefore shall I want nothing; for God never "fails to help and govern them whom he doth "bring up in his stedfast fear and love."

Our present collect contains—a declaration of God's goodness towards his people, and—a prayer founded on that declaration. The preface of our collect acknowledges, in a grateful address to God, his great goodness towards his people, in which we shall consider—the character which is drawn of those who are the objects of divine regard, and the nature and extent of God's favour to them.

The objects of divine regard are those whom God "hath brought up in his stedfast fear and "love." These exclusively are partakers of his special favour and complacential regard. Sinners, as such, he pities, and hath opened a way for their return to his paternal embrace. But none can be assured of an interest in his affection, can cry "Abba, Father," or rely on his help and government, except those who are described in our collect as possessed of filial dispositions towards their heavenly Father. And it is carefully to be observed that these are not partakers of his special favour on account of any natural difference between them and others; for the distinction which is made is entirely of grace. The proud supposition that we have any thing which we have not received, is precluded by our collect; for those very qualities, by which the objects of divine regard are distinguished from others, are expressly ascribed to the operation of divine influence upon them.

The fear of God in which his people are brought up is that reverential regard to him, that filial awe of his Majesty, which pervades and is interwoven with all their sensibilities and all their conduct. To enter at large into the nature and effects of this holy fear, would open too wide a field for our present purpose. We must therefore

be content with observing that it implies a supreme respect and reverence for God as our Father and Lawgiver, and for every thing which he has enjoined and commanded. His name, his word, his day, his ordinances, his commands, are to his people objects of habitual, devout, and affectionate regard. The promotion of his glory is their aim, and the attainment of his approbation their end.

Reader, hast thou been brought up in the fear of God? Is this divine principle paramount in thy bosom? Dost thou fear to offend him more than thou fearest the displeasure of the world, and so as to be ready to incur any temporal inconvenience, loss, or suffering, rather than his frown? Read the account which is given of the spirit by which Daniel, and Shadrach, Mesech and Abednego were actuated; and then inquire whether the same divine temper is to be found, in any degree, in thyself. They feared God, and therefore had nothing else to fear. And let it be remarked, that this holy disposition is not a slavish dread of punishment, restraining merely from outward acts of sin; for this may exist where there is not a spark of filial fear. That is only occasional and partial in its influence; but this is constant and universal. "The re-"straint" which arises from legal terror, "can "give us no solid comfort, if it be but a bare "restraint and no more: we should not rest nor "think ourselves safe enough, till we have a well "grounded assurance, that we are possessed of a "better and a higher grace, even the grace of "sanctification. For this will hold out against "temptations where that may fail. We may "deceive ourselves then (and thousands in the "world do so deceive themselves) if upon our

" abstaining from sins, from which God with-
" holdeth us, we presently conclude ourselves to
" be in a state of grace, and to have the power
" of godliness and the spirit of sanctification.
" For, between this restraining grace, whereof
" we have now spoken, and the renewing grace
" whereof we now speak, there are sundry wide
" differences. They differ, first, in their foun-
" tain. Renewing grace springeth from the
" special love of God towards those that are his
" in Christ: restraining grace is a fruit of that
" general mercy of God, whereof it is said in the
" Psalm that 'his mercy is over all his works.'
" They differ, secondly, in their extent: both of
" *person, subject, object,* and *time.* For the
" *person:* restraining grace is common to good
" and bad; renewing grace proper and peculiar
" to the elect. For the *subject:* restraining
" grace may bind one part or faculty of a man;
" as the hand or tongue, and leave another free,
" as the heart or ear; renewing grace worketh
" upon all in some measure, sanctifieth the whole
" man, 'body, soul, and spirit,' with all the parts
" and faculties of each. For the *object:* restrain-
" ing grace may withhold a man from one sin,
" and give him scope to another; renewing grace
" carrieth an equal and just respect to all God's
" commandments. For the *time:* restraining
" grace may tye us now, and by and by unloose
" us; renewing grace holdeth out unto the
" end, more or less, and never leaveth us wholly
" destitute. Thirdly, they differ in their ends.
" Restraining grace is so intended chiefly for the
" good of humane society (especially of the church
" of God, and of the members thereof) as that in-
" differently it may, or may not, do good to the
" receiver; but renewing grace is especially in-

" tended for the salvation of the receiver, though
" *ex. consequenti* it do good also unto others.
" They differ, fourthly and lastly, in their effects.
" Renewing grace mortifieth the corruption
" and subdueth it and diminisheth it, as water
" quencheth fire, by abating the heat: but re-
" straining grace only inhibiteth the exercise of
" the corruption for the time, without any real
" diminution of it either in substance or quality;
" as the fire wherein the three children walked,
" had as much heat in it at that very instant, as
" it had before and after, although by the greater
" power of God the natural power of it was then
" suspended from working upon them. The
" lions that spared Daniel, were lions still, and
" had their ravenous dispositions still; albeit
" God stopped their mouths for that time that
" they should not hurt him. But that there was
" no change in their natural disposition appeareth
" by their entertainment of their next guests,
" whom they devoured with all greediness, break-
" ing their bones before they came to the ground.
" By these two instances and examples we may
" in some measure conceive of the nature and
" power of the restraining grace of God in wicked
" men. It bridleth the corruption that is in
" them for the time that it cannot break out;
" and manacleth them in such sort, that they do
" not shew forth the ungodly disposition of their
" heart. But there is no real change wrought in
" them all the while; their heart still remaining
" unsanctified, and their natural corruption undi-
" minished. Whereas the renewing grace of
" God, by a real change, of a lion maketh a
" lamb; altereth the natural disposition of the
" soul by draining out some of the corruption,
" begetteth a new heart, a new spirit, new

"habits, new qualities, new dispositions, new "thoughts, new desires—maketh a new man, in "every part and faculty compleatly new. Con- "tent not thyself then with a bare forbearance "of sin, so long as thy heart is not changed, nor "thy will changed, nor thy affections changed; "but strive to become a new man, to be trans- "formed by the renewing of thy mind, to hate "sin, to love God, to wrestle against thy secret "corruptions, to take delight in holy duties, to "subdue thine understanding, and will, and "affections, to the obedience of faith and godli- "ness. So shalt thou not only be restrained "from sinning against God as Abimelech was; "but also be enabled, as faithful Abraham was; "to please God; and consequently assured, with "all the faithful children of Abraham, to be pre- "served by the almighty power of God through "faith unto salvation*."

The love of God, in which his people are further said to be brought up, is that spirit of gratitude to him which they feel on account of his goodness to them, and that delight in him which they experience as the only source of happiness to their souls. They love him, because he hath first loved them; and deriving from the contemplation of his excellencies, and their hope of personal interest in him, a satisfaction which the world can neither give nor take away, they cleave to him as their portion for ever.

Many persons preposterously presume that they love God, who in works deny him; while others, without any substantial reason, doubt whether they love him or not, though their conduct proves that they are sincerely attached to

* Bishop Saunderson's Sermon ad populum, on Gen. xx. 6.

him. In order, therefore, to assist the reader in the awful work of self-examination on this subject, let it be observed that, wherever love to God exists, it must be a supreme regard. For no one can love God at all, till he is made sensible of the immense obligations under which redeeming love hath laid him; and it is impossible that those obligations should be felt without producing the language of the devout Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there "is none upon earth that I desire in comparison "of thee." "The love of Christ constraineth*" those "in whose hearts it is shed abroad by the "Holy Ghost given unto them," "because they "thus judge, that if one died for all, then were "all dead; and that he died for all, that they "which live should not henceforth live unto "themselves, but unto him that died for them "and rose again." In the natural heart, enmity to God reigns. Divine love therefore is an exotic in the human breast. It is the product of faith. It arises from a discovery, divinely made, of God's love to us. And that discovery cannot be made without producing a supreme regard. After conversion, love to God becomes the predominant principle of the soul, occupying the same place and office which the main-spring occupies in a machine. However feeble our light, however weak our faith, yet love is the bias of the soul. Though the tide be slack, and the breeze gentle, love is the helm which regulates all our motions.

* "Συνεχει, id est, totos possident ac regit, ut ejus afflatu "quasi correpti agamus omnia; alludit enim ad vatum "furorem."——*Beza.*

"Could you place a boat on the impetuous cataracts of "the Nile, you would see what is meant by the significant "word, συνεχει."——*Hervey's Dialogues.*

In its infant-state divine love may be compared to a monarch newly raised to the throne, whose government, though not fully established, is vested with full authority. It is like the light of the morning which, though faint, reaches over the whole hemisphere; or rather like the vernal heat, which, though far inferior to that of the summer-solstice, is universally diffused and influential.

Love to any object is invariably productive of a desire after union and intercourse with it. The soul that is captivated with the love of God, pants after him "as the hart panteth after the water-"brooks:" it is "athirst for God;" and its inquiry is, "When shall I come and appear before God?" The love of gold is the miser's ruling passion; and it discovers itself by all his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, his desires and aversions. The more he has, the more he wishes to possess*. In human friendship the operation of love is the same. The absence of the beloved object occasions pain to the mind, and its presence pleasure. Similar to this, but in an infinitely higher degree, is the love of Christ to his people:—"He loved "them, and gave himself for them:" and he says, "Father, I will that they also whom thou "hast given me be with me where I am." And such also in its nature, though, alas! far inferior in its intenseness and constancy, is the love which the children of God feel for their heavenly Father. (Phil. i. 23.) Hence the ordinances of divine worship in which God has promised his presence, and in which they have enjoyed communion with him, are very precious to them. And hence their "desire to depart and to be with "Christ."

*Crescit amor nummi, quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.

A supreme regard to any object supposes that the mind rests and reposes itself thereon; so as to look no further for the satisfaction which it wants. "Give me this and I have enough," is its language. Now as all the stars will not supply the place of one sun, so no creature-comforts will supply the place of God in the affections of his people. And on the other hand, as one sun will more than supply the place of all the stars, in like manner the divine presence makes poverty, solitude, sickness, a dungeon, yea, a body consuming at the stake, not only tolerable, but also delightful. In proof of this it will be sufficient to remind the reader of a martyr in the Marian persecution, who, while enveloped in the flames, declared to those who stood around him that he seemed to himself as if he lay on a bed of roses. And it is further to be observed that proportioned to the degree of satisfaction which the mind feels in its beloved object is the indifference which it will manifest towards other things, and its abstraction from them. The Samaritan woman forgot her water-pot, when she had found her Saviour. (John iv. 28.) Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was glued to the Saviour's feet, whence neither the concerns of the family nor the remonstrances of her sister could remove her. The performance of every relative duty is indeed consistent with the most fervent love of God and required by it, and a concern for his glory will ensure the strict performance of it; but the soul which partakes of its influence will act under the power of motives derived from it in all its duties, and will seek and find God in every engagement.

The sincerity of love to God will be demonstrated by its proper effects. Every tree produces

its own fruit. Divine love will shew itself by a tenderness of conscience with respect to all the actions of life; by a constant circumspection, discovering an unremitting desire of pleasing God, a fear of offending him, and an endeavour after conformity to his likeness and will. It will produce continual sorrow for sin, which the Scripture calls "godly sorrow," because it originates in a regard to God, and is maintained thereby; and likewise a joy in every opportunity which is afforded of giving honour to his name: and such opportunities will be anxiously sought and gladly embraced. If we love God, his friends will be chosen as our friends, and we shall separate ourselves from those who are his enemies; except indeed when either the administration of secular affairs necessarily subjects us to their acquaintance, or when an association with them affords a hope of reconciling them to God. What hath been said of friendship in general, may be applied to divine friendship:—

"A gen'rous friendship no cold medium knows,
"But with one love, with one resentment glows."

It may be added, that wherever this love exists, there is an ardent desire for its growth. For the lover of God painfully perceives the incompetency of his love to the worth of its object, and to the obligations under which he is laid. He mourns therefore on account of the languor which prevails in his regard to God, prays for more grace, and joyfully anticipates the time when he shall love God in a degree more suitable to his divine excellencies.

Having hinted at the properties and effects of love to God, let me pause and ask myself, Do I love him? Let me try to enforce the question

of our blessed Lord, "Lovest thou me?" on the conscience of every reader. Let us not be hasty and precipitate in our reply, lest we deceive our own souls. But let us scrutinise the properties of love, the sensibilities of our hearts, and the testimony of our conduct, before we decide. Are none of us at a loss for an answer? Is there no one to whom the question is addressed who is obliged to hesitate? None to whom the Searcher of hearts might say, as he said to the Jews, "I know you that ye have not the love "of God in you?" Or, is there no one who can say no more than, "Lord, thou knowest all "things: thou knowest that I cannot tell whe-"ther I love thee or not?" But should a question of so great importance be left to an uncertainty? Should we not blush and tremble to acknowledge, that it is a doubt whether we love him who made us and redeemed us?

Let it be remembered, that not to love God is worse than brutal; for "the ox knoweth his "owner, and the ass his master's crib." Nay, it is worse than devilish, for the devils have no such motives to love God as redemption imposes on us. Oh, consider these motives, and weigh in the balance of equity the tremendous curse which is denounced, (1 Cor. xvi. 22,) "If any "man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him "be Anathema Maran-atha." Most awful imprecation! But how just! Its equity will be exhibited and sanctioned by the decisions of the last day. No one will arraign the justice of the sentence which dooms the hater of God (and there is no intermediate state between love and hatred) to eternal misery. And as this sentence is just, it is also necessary that the hater of God should be excluded from heaven, for heaven is

the region of love. Love is the element in which its inhabitants breathe. And without its limits, all is darkness, hatred, rage, horror, and despair. Listen, sinner, ere it be too late, to the voice of thy dying Saviour. He asks, "Lovest thou me?" Oh, survey him, and see if there be nothing in his person and character to attract and fix thy love. He who hung upon the cross asks, "Lovest thou me?" Every circumstance of life may be considered as a proposal of this question to our consciences, and as a test of its solution. Every duty, every trial, and every relation in which we stand to God or our fellow-creatures, prosperity and adversity, sickness and health, life and death, may be regarded as criterions of our love to God, and as opportunities of exhibiting that love to view.

The state of those who are the genuine members of the Christian church on earth, is a state of education for eternal felicity. They are minors, and the Christian church is a school in which they are placed for instruction and the formation of habits suitable to their future designation. They are "heirs of God," and "begotten to a "lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, "undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which is "reserved in heaven for them" when their course of education is finished. The sciences in which they are trained are "the fear and love of God," for the attainment of which they are prepared by initiation in self-knowledge and the knowledge of Christ crucified. The book which they are required to study is the Bible; and the great teacher is God the Holy Ghost. It is under his tuition that they receive the first rudiments of spiritual knowledge, and are carried forward to its high perfection. The pupils of this hea-

venly school are admitted at different ages and under different circumstances. Some are called into it from the days of childhood, others in riper years, and some even in the decline of life. Some are closer students, of a more teachable temper, and more apt scholars, than others. Different methods are also necessary to be employed respecting them, some being disciplined more by the rod of correction than others. But the all-wise Instructor of his people never fails to prepare those who are under his care for their future rank and station in the kingdom of God. The grand inquiry which we have to make is, Whether we are yet admitted into this academy, and are submitting to the tuition of its divine Master?

The epithet "stedfast" is annexed to those qualities by which the objects of divine favour are characterised, for the purpose of distinguishing more fully the temper of their minds from that of others. In carnal and worldly persons something which slightly and partially resembles "the fear and love of God" may occasionally be discerned. In some instances they may be restrained from the commission of gross sin, or from the omission of external duties, by a regard to God. They may also do many things which God has required, after the example of Herod. (Mark vi. 20.) But though terror may curb, or passion excite them, the gracious influence of "stedfast fear and love" is a stranger to their breasts. In the godly, "the fear and love of "God" are habitual, predominant, growing principles—not indeed always alike vigorous, but always influential.

The favour of God towards those "whom he "brings up in his stedfast fear and love," is

certain, constant, and unchangeable. For he "never fails to help and govern them." "He "hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake "thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord "is my helper, and I will not fear what man "shall do unto me;" no, nor what the whole host of hell may attempt to do. God's faithful promise binds him to "help and govern" us, if we are pupils of his academy. And the experience of his people in all ages abundantly confirms the veracity of his promise.

But what help does he afford? All that his pupils need. He helps them to repent, to believe, and to obey. He helps them to persevere in a course of repentance, faith, and obedience. He comforts them under trials, enlightens them when in darkness, succours them when in temptation, "strengthens them with might by his Spirit in "the inner man," whereby they are enabled to maintain the conflict against the devil, the world, and the flesh: in short, he is a very present help "in the time of need," of whatever kind the exigency may be.

He moreover "governs" as well as helps his people. They are brought under a theocracy with respect to their spiritual concerns. His laws regulate their conduct; his shield defends them from their enemies; his approbation cheers their souls, and binds them more strongly to their allegiance; and his honours will finally remunerate their fidelity.

It is assumed in our collect, that all who unite in it are of the number of those whom God is bringing up in his stedfast fear and love; for the collect is designed for general use in the church. But is this assumption just with respect to the writer and reader of these pages? On

this supposition we proceed to pray that "God "would keep us under the protection of his good "providence, and make us to have a perpetual "fear and love of his holy name, through Jesus "Christ our Lord." We consider ourselves to be under his protection as his people, and pray that we may remain under it; we assume that the "fear and love of his name" have been implanted in our hearts, and pray that these graces may be perpetuated.

We pray that God would "*keep* us under the "protection of his good providence;" inferring, as the result of close self-examination, that we are under his care, "who never fails to help and "govern them whom he doth bring up in his "stedfast fear and love." "The protection of "God's good providence" is that "help and "government," which he never fails to afford to his people. The propriety of praying for a continuance of divine protection, both for our souls and bodies, is evident from a consideration of the many and imminent dangers to which we are ever exposed. We are only safe, either from ghostly or bodily dangers, while God keeps us: And his promise to keep us does not supersede the necessity of prayer, but implies dependence on our part, and is the motive and encouragement to its vigorous exercise. And we are also to remember, that although God's promise cannot be broken, and consequently his help and government cannot fail, yet we daily and hourly forfeit, by our failure in the duty which we owe to our sovereign Lord, the benefit of his protection, and therefore are bound humbly and earnestly to pray for a renewal and continuance of it.

As "the protection of God's good providence" is confined to those whom he is "bringing up in "his stedfast fear and love;" and as we cannot maintain in our hearts, by our own strength, "the fear and love of his holy name;" we therefore proceed to beseech him, that he would "make "us to have a perpetual fear and love of his "holy name." We pray for persevering grace, that the holy temper of mind which he hath produced within us may be subject to no interruption, but may increase more and more until it is perfected. And oh! Christian reader, how needful a petition is this! When we consider how inadequate our "fear and love" are to the cause that produces them, to the object that claims them; how often their exercise is in a great measure interrupted; how, at times, they languish and seem ready to expire; how needful is the concluding petition of our collect, "Lord, "we beseech thee, make us to have a perpetual "fear and love of thy holy name!" Our frequent past backslidings, our present consciousness of imbecility, our enemies, and our dangers, all concur in exciting us to importunity in the use of this prayer.

Let every one examine himself closely, whether he can honestly unite in it. No one can, in whose heart the fear and love of God are not predominant; for no one else can desire to have these holy dispositions perpetuated. O let those who are unconscious of being under his tuition who "brings up his people in his stedfast fear "and love," tremble for themselves! They have no reason to expect divine help and governance. They are without God in the world, outlaws of his kingdom, and liable to his wrath. Oh, how

awful a state! May they come and implore pardon of their offended Sovereign, and swear allegiance to him.

Let the nature of genuine godliness be gathered from our collect. It is a supreme regard to God. All who are without it are ungodly. They are of the world, and will perish with the world.

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us; and grant that we, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray, may by thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and necessities, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER is the key which opens the repository of spiritual food, the wardrobe and the armoury of heaven. It is the bolt which excludes the thief and the robber, the stormy wind and tempest. It is "the outlet of trouble, and the inlet "of consolation."

The advantages, however, which result from prayer, vast and manifest as they are, lie concealed from the world. But they are known to a favoured few, the genuine members of Christ's holy Catholic church, to whom the secret of true happiness hath been disclosed. "The mysterious commerce of the human soul "with the divine Spirit" is that "secret of the "Lord which is with them who fear him."

In the work of prayer, as in every other act of the divine life, "all is of God, who hath "reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." It is his "Spirit that helpeth our infirmities; "for we know not what we should pray for as "we ought: but the Spirit himself maketh "intercession for us with groanings which can-

" not be uttered*." In our natural state, while we continue " sensual, not having the Spirit," we feel no spiritual necessities, and are conscious of no spiritual desires. A dead body has no wants, no sensations; and a soul that is " dead " in trespasses and sins " is equally void of spiritual sensibility. And even after that we have been " quickened to newness of life," so great is our ignorance, that, although we are become conscious of many and pressing needs, know that there is a provision made for their supply, and have learned from whence and in what manner relief is to be derived; yet " we know not " what to pray for as we ought." Left to ourselves, we should make requests, a compliance with which would prove injurious to our own souls and dishonourable to God, as children often prefer petitions to their parents which cannot be granted. Our ignorance respects not only the blessings which we implore, but also the manner of seeking relief. Our infirmities are many and great. Sometimes guilt stops the mouth. Sometimes trouble overwhelms the spirit. Sometimes worldly cares distract the mind. And sometimes languor or obduracy disqualifies us for drawing near to God.

It is happy for the people of God that " the " Spirit helpeth their infirmities and maketh " intercession for them;" and they know it. He discovers our spiritual wants, awakens our sensibilities, kindles our desires, exhibits to our view the throne of grace sprinkled with atoning blood, creates and increases faith, and enables us to cry, " Abba, Father." The emotion of

* " Strongly complaineth for us with inarticulate groan- " ings." ——*Macknight.*

holy desire within us is his "intercession for us." And those fervent desires which he kindles are sometimes productive of inexpressible groans; the desire is too big and strong for utterance by words. But the groan of unutterable desire is clearly intelligible to the Searcher of hearts, who "knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit" whose language it is; and it cannot be unsuccessful.

Our collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity opens with a petition for a favourable audience to our prayers. It is the language of a humble and fervent spirit which hath nothing but mercy to plead, and which is earnest in pleading mercy through Jesus Christ. We have had occasion to notice such general requests in former collects. We shall now, therefore, only observe, that they correspond with the sensibilities of all awakened persons, whose petitions are the language of their hearts, and the expressions of real wants which they feel. Nothing can satisfy them but the possession of the desired good, and till that is obtained, they renew their supplications. Formalists may satisfy themselves by paying a tribute of outward homage to the divine Majesty. Their prayers mean nothing more. They are conscious of no wants nor desires; and it is no wonder if such persons censure the tautology of our Common Prayer Book. But the divinely instructed soul will understand why we recur again and again to the same subject, and will approve such tautologous cries of the broken and contrite heart. Till we arrive at our journey's end, our progress must be maintained by an uninterrupted succession of steps. Till we reach the desired haven, we must repeat the stroke of the oar, without complaining of lassitude from the continuation of the action.

Our collect proceeds to make a specific request for "defence and comfort in all dangers and "necessities," describing the persons on whose behalf the request is made.

That the people of God are exposed to many and great dangers and necessities, needs no proof. And as in the review of former collects this subject has been brought before us*, we shall not again dwell on its illustration. But let not our liturgy be censured for vain repetitions. Who would blame a drowning man for reiterating his cry for help, or a starving beggar for frequent references to his inward pangs? The hearer, who in safety and satiety could condemn the one or the other, would justly be considered as a senseless wretch, whose heart is made of brass or adamant. The experience of every awakened person will afford the necessary comment on this part of our collect; to others, no comment could convey its meaning. For a man who is asleep may, like Jonah, be in the very jaws of the most imminent perils without any consciousness of his awful situation. But our collect is designed exclusively for the use of those who have heard the rousing call, "Awake "thou that sleepest and arise from the dead," by which they have been excited to spiritual perception. Those favoured persons, "who have "their senses exercised to discern both good "and evil," know that they are surrounded, both in body and soul, by many and great "dangers "and adversities," in which God only can defend and comfort them.

That we have no means of defence to which

* See the Collects for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany, and for the Second Sunday in Lent.

we can resort, no source of comfort from which we can derive relief, independent of the throne of grace, is another truth which needs no formal confirmation by argument. The gracious soul has learned it by experience, and rational inference is inadequate to the conviction of others. "Children of wrath," which, without redemption, must be for ever "wrath to come," we can make no atonement for our guilt. Justly shut out from heaven for our sins by the irreversible decree of the covenant of works that "the soul which sinneth shall die," we can make no compensation for the past, nor engage for a future fulfilment of the terms of that covenant which saith, "This do and thou shalt live." And when we are "justified freely by divine "grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus "Christ;" still the renewal of our fallen souls in holiness, "without which no man shall see "the Lord," is a work altogether as much out of our own power as the work of atonement. The temptations of Satan, the corruptions of their own hearts, and the allurements of the world, daily endanger the safety of those who are "called with a holy calling." Against these temptations, corruptions, and allurements, they have no defence but "the mighty aid" of Omnipotence. In the conflict with them they can find no comfort, but what they derive from the promises of the Gospel and the consolations of grace. But "the aid and defence" which they have reason to expect are all-sufficient.

The phraseology of our collect deserves particularly to be noticed. We pray "that, by "God's mighty aid, we may be defended and "comforted IN all dangers and adversities." The children of God have no reason to expect

an exemption from "dangers and adversities" while they continue in the present world. They will every day be reminded that they "are not "as yet come unto the rest and to the inheri-"tance which the Lord their God giveth them." Their present state is a state of trial and warfare, of which they have no encouragement to pray for a termination, till the good fight is fought, the course finished, and victory obtained. But they may implore "defence and comfort in all "their dangers and adversities" with full confidence of success.

Of what nature is the defence which we implore? To what objects doth it relate? On this question our church shall be her own expositor, and declare her own meaning. The deprecations in the litany will afford us a paraphrase on the petition of the collect now under consideration. They will remind us of our dangers, of which there is a great variety but no cessation. Of these the principal is the danger of sinning, and this is the parent of all the rest. From this therefore, first and chiefly, we desire to be defended; from the guilt of sin which renders us liable to eternal misery, and from its power which disqualifies us for eternal happiness. We pray for pardon and sanctification, for defence against the punishment and the pollution of sin, and then descend to a specification of its acts, causes, and effects. We pray for deliverance from inward corruption in the heart, and outward enormity in the life. We implore defence from temporal evil, whether coming more immediately from the hand of God or from man, and from spiritual evil as still more to be dreaded. The arguments and pleas by which we enforce our petitions are the meri-

"torious acts of the Son of God; and we conclude this deprecatory part of the litany by specifying those seasons in which we more particularly need divine help. "Remember not, O Lord, "our offences, nor the offences of our forefa- "thers, neither take thou vengeance of our "sins; spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, "whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious "blood, and be not angry with us for ever."— "*Spare us, good Lord.*"——"From all evil and "mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults "of the devil, from thy wrath, and from ever- "lasting damnation,"—"*Good Lord, deliver us.*"——"From all blindness of heart; from "pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, "hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness," —"*Good Lord, deliver us.*"——"From forni- "cation, and all other deadly sins; and from all "the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the "devil,"—"*Good Lord, deliver us.*"——"From "lightning and tempest; from plague, pesti- "lence, and famine; from battle and murder, "and from sudden death,"—"*Good Lord, deli- "ver us.*"——"From all sedition, privy conspi- "racy, and rebellion; from all false doctrine, "heresy, and schism; from hardness of heart, "and contempt of thy word and command- "ment,"—"*Good Lord, deliver us.*"——"By "the mystery of thy holy incarnation; by thy "holy nativity and circumcision; by thy bap- "tism, fasting, and temptation,"—"*Good Lord, "deliver us.*"——"By thine agony and bloody "sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy pre- "cious death and burial; by thy glorious resur- "rection and ascension; and by the coming of "the Holy Ghost,"—"*Good Lord, deliver us.*" ——"In all time of our tribulation; in all time

" of our wealth; in the hour of death, and in " the day of judgment,"—" *Good Lord, deliver* " *us.*"

The comfort which we implore is the relief of our " necessities," whether temporal or spiritual. Particularly we pray for the divine presence to support our minds and sanctify our afflictions. If God be with us as he is revealed in his word, through the grace of his Spirit, we cannot despond nor be destitute of consolation. For whatever may be the necessities which we experience, we shall be enabled to believe that, in his good time, they will all be relieved and supplied.

A grand question still remains to be answered. Who are the persons that may expect God's interference on their behalf? Of what description are the persons in whose favour the petition of our collect is offered? Are divine defence and comfort promised to all men? Or (to bring the inquiry within narrower limits) are all those who adopt the form of prayer, and join in the external performance of divine worship, authorised to expect defence and comfort from God? Surely not. God's faithful people, exclusively, can look up with confidence and implore these blessings. For them, and none but them, is our collect intended. Are we of the blessed number? May we reasonably expect, in all our dangers and necessities, to receive divine protection and consolation? Perhaps it may be asked, How shall I determine the momentous question, whether I am numbered among the Lord's people or not? To this the reply is easy. The people of God are distinguished by many legible marks; one of which is specified in our collect. God has " given " to them " an hearty

"desire to pray." God hath poured out upon them "the spirit of grace and supplication." A spirit of supplication is inseparable from a spirit of grace. It is an invariable effect of divine influence on the heart. We shall endeavour to shew wherein the spirit of prayer consists, and from whence it is derived.

It consists in a perception of our spiritual wants and necessities, without which the posture of the body and the motion of the lips can be of no avail. Prayer is desire; and desire supposes want. Now all men are spiritually poor, but all are not "poor in spirit;" and to these the benediction of our Saviour is confined. (Matt. v. 3.) We all need pardoning, converting, and sanctifying grace; but all men are not conscious of their needy state. It remains for our consciences to determine, whether we are so convinced of our wants that we feel in ourselves a fervent desire of those blessings which our lips implore.

The spirit of prayer further includes or supposes an acquaintance with God's promises to supply our wants, and with the method in which that supply is to be granted. A knowledge of our urgent wants (the want of things which are essential to our comfort and salvation) would produce despondency and inactivity of soul without a knowledge of God in Christ. A perishing wretch, though tormented with the pangs of hunger and apprised of approaching death, would lie down in despair and resign himself up to his fate, if he were situated in the midst of a barren wilderness far from the habitations of man or any hope of relief. But let him know that his case is not desperate, and he will exert himself to the utmost for the purpose of procuring food.

He will employ the little strength that remains, however painful the experiment may prove, in crying for help, or in crawling towards the place from which it is expected. "Blessed are they," and they only, "who *hunger and thirst* after "righteousness, for they shall be filled."

The spirit of prayer is the promised Spirit of God, "making intercession for us with groanings "that cannot be uttered." Our collect tells us that "an hearty desire to pray" is the gift of God. Every sigh that distends the contrite bosom is of his operation. And he who indites our prayers must be fully acquainted with his own meaning in them, and design to answer them.

Let those who are unconscious of any "hearty "desire to pray" tremble for themselves. They have no evidence that they are the Lord's people and interested in his promises. Unless the spirit of grace and supplication is communicated to us, we have no ground to expect God's "defence "and comfort." On the contrary, being without God, we are exposed to every evil temporal and eternal. We are destitute of all solid comfort, and must remain in this state for ever unless God should bestow on us "an hearty desire to "pray" for the pardon of our past impiety and a change of heart.

Those favoured persons to whom "God hath "given an hearty desire to pray" may be assured that their labour shall not be in vain. They may meet with many difficulties and discouragements in their approaches to the mercy-seat. Their faith may be tried and their hope deferred. Danger may press on them and necessities multiply. But God most assuredly hears, in every instance, the voice of his own

Spirit; and all sincere prayer is his voice, for independent of his inspiration we have no power to pray. God's "heavenly inspirations and our "holy desires are as so many angels of inter-"course and commerce between God and us*." God never implants a desire which he doth not mean to accomplish. "He will fulfil the desire "of them that fear him: he also will hear their "cry and will save them." If therefore danger should surround us on every side, and threaten instant destruction; if our necessities be more in number than the hairs of our heads, and each of them require omnipotence for its relief; we may be assured of safety and comfort, if we have learned, through grace, to pour out our hearts before God. The desire to pray is an earnest of the blessing implored—the forerunner of success. What the Apostle says of his preaching, we may apply to the divine purpose respecting the salvation of a sinner, of which an hearty desire to pray is a sure indication given him. It is "not "*yea* and *nay*, but in Christ it is *yea*. For all "the promises of God in him are *Yea*, and "in him *Amen*, to the glory of God." 2 Cor. i. 19, 20.

* Hooker's Eccles. Polity, vol. ii. p. 101, Oxford edition.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy, that thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.

It is a characteristic of a Christian believer that he "looks not at the things which are seen, but "at the things which are not seen," knowing "that the things which are seen are temporal," transitory and of short duration, while "the "things which are not seen are eternal," durable, and without end.

The Scriptures assert that one principal effect of the fatal catastrophe in Paradise is a total blindness diffused over the human mind. Fallen man has his "understanding darkened, being "alienated from the life of God through the "ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness "of his heart." And this darkness, in which man is naturally enveloped, is so thick that the star-like glimmer of education and human instruction cannot penetrate it. Nay, the light which is shed on the objects of faith by an external revelation is insufficient to remove it without divine teaching. The truth of this appears from

the radical mistakes which are made, even by men of profound erudition who have the Bible in their hands, on the subject of true religion.

That the whole conduct of life is required to be under the influence of faith, and that it is so in every real Christian, in every genuine member of our church, is evident from the language both of the Scriptures and of our liturgy. "We *walk* "by faith, not by sight." Now *walking* is the motion of the whole body from one place towards another; and when applied to the soul it signifies its tendency, the bias of the will and affections towards God or the world. Literally, it is not the exertion of a single member but of the whole body; and metaphorically, it is not an occasional act but the general tenour of the heart and life. If this be true, it follows that the common supposition which makes religion to consist in the performance of certain occasional duties, limited to certain periods, is a most dreadful and fatal delusion. Were a judgment to be formed of true religion from the spirit and conduct of many who profess it, we might compare it to a garment which is made to be worn on certain special occasions. Some persons put it on when they go to church, and throw it off immediately on their return home. Others wear it through the whole sabbath. And some few, perhaps, during the whole week that precedes the administration of the Lord's Supper. But it is evident that the garment does not fit them, that they put it on with reluctance, and are glad to divest themselves of it as an incumbrance. These persons are all equally ignorant of true religion, for religion is a new nature; (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 9, 10;) and our nature cannot

be put off and on at pleasure. Sad is his state who has only "the form of godliness without its "power."

The conduct of every unrenewed man is wholly under the regulation of sense, notwithstanding any occasional acts of religious duty which he may perform. He walks by sight, not by faith. The objects of sense, the pleasures, riches, and honours of the world, are the idols which the natural heart reveres and adores. And supremely to affect these, and to set the affections on any thing which may be classed under either of these divisions, is to give as full proof of an unconverted state as any vicious practice whatever can afford. It is not an occasional act of outward piety which makes a Christian, nor of sin that constitutes an unbeliever. The essence of the fall consists in the alienation of the heart from God, and its guilty attachment to the world. The recovery of the heart for God is conversion. Without this no abstinence from outward sin nor acts of homage will avail. God is, by creation, our father. And though a son abstain from open violence towards his parent's person, yet alienation of affection is highly criminal; and a preference given to the society and commands of a stranger would be full proof of that alienation. God is our master. And were a servant to purloin his master's property, though the money were not spent in a brothel or a tavern, the act of robbery would be justly punishable. We sadly mistake, if we suppose that outward enormities are the only things which are cognizable by the divine law, or the only provocatives of divine displeasure. These are foul streams which prove the corruption of the fountain, sour fruit which shews the nature of the tree that produces it.

Want of love to God, however it be manifested, is the essence of sin in which its criminality chiefly consists. Devils are neither gluttons, drunkards, nor adulterers. In the common sense of the words, they have neither committed murder, nor theft. But they are haters of God.

It is the characteristic of the Christian life that it is wholly produced and governed by faith in the Son of God. Faith is the master-key which opens and shuts all the avenues of the renewed soul. Christians are therefore denominated "the "faithful in Christ Jesus." Should it be asked, What are those objects of faith which govern the conduct of those who are under its influence? It may be replied that the whole word of God, as revealing objects of the highest importance in which all mankind are interested, is the spring and rule of a Christian life. But this answer to the inquiry is too general to affect the conscience. It may therefore further be observed, that the value of the soul is one of the first objects of faith which awakens the mind and influences the conduct. By a discovery hereof serious reflection is produced, and a solicitude to secure happiness in a future state. This leads to an examination of the divine law. And when its nature and sanctions are perceived, conviction of sin is produced. A future judgment, and an eternity of happiness or misery, enforce the necessity of listening to the voice of conviction, and of inquiring after salvation. Hereby the sinner is led to the cross of Christ, where his mind is captivated by a sight of the dying Saviour. New desires and aversions, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, now take possession of his soul; and he determines, through grace, henceforth to live not unto himself, but to him that died for him, and rose again. To secure

the approbation of his adorable Redeemer, and to become meet for a place in his kingdom, become now the governing motives of his conduct. He acts like a stranger on earth, and has "his "conversation in heaven, from whence he looks "for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

The whole tenour of our collect now under review is such, that it is exclusively adapted to the lips of those who "are walking not after the flesh "but after the Spirit;" whose "affections are "set on things above, and not on things on the "earth." For it is evidently supposed that those who use it "trust in God," and are "ruled and "guided" by him. The reader's conscience must decide whether this supposition be justified in his own case, and whether he can honestly adopt the prayer which is subjoined as an expression of his own fervent desire.

Our collect consists of a preface and a prayer. In the former we address our covenant "God" as "the protector of all that trust in him, with-"out whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy;" and in the latter we implore grace, that, under the rule and guidance of our God, "we may so pass "through things temporal that finally we lose "not the things eternal."

In speaking of the protection which God affords to his people, we might enlarge on the security from temporal evils which he affords them. For he not only preserves them in common with others from innumerable calamities to which they are exposed, but, when he permits affliction to come upon them, he protects them from its poison, and converts it into a blessing. "All things "work together for good to them that love "God and are the called according to his "purpose."

" From heaven's rebuke what heavenly blessings flow!
" Happy who scorn not the reforming blow:
" O scorn not thou; the same kind wounding hand
" Its balm diffuses, and applies its band.
" Then ills on ills about thy path may swell
" In vain! His arm will ev'ry ill repel*."

Of divine protection from spiritual evils we may speak with still stronger confidence. For though believers, like all other sinners, are by nature exposed to every evil, yet by flying for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel, they are secured from every threatening danger. " Their place of defence is the munition of " rocks," for God is their " shield and buckler." They are, as sinners, liable to divine wrath, but " there is no condemnation to them who are in " Christ Jesus." Eternal life is given them, and they can " never perish," none " shall pluck " them out of their heavenly Father's hand." They may be assaulted by Satan, and may dread his infernal power, but they are assured of present protection and final victory. " He that dwelleth " in the secret place of the Most High, shall " abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He " may say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my " fortress: my God, in him will I trust. Surely " he will deliver (those who trust in him) from " the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome " pestilence. He will cover them with his fea- " thers, and under his wings shall they trust; " his truth shall be their shield and buckler." And, moreover, " God shall bruise Satan under " their feet shortly." Those who trust in God are also protected from the tyrannizing power of indwelling sin; for he has promised that " sin

* Scott's Book of Job, in English verse, chap. v. 17–19.

"shall not have dominion" over those, who "are "not under the law but under grace." Frequently they appear indeed to themselves to be almost, if not entirely, vanquished; but even when reduced to the last extremity, they revive, their courage is renewed, and victory again declares for them. The glory of God and the final happiness of his redeemed require that the corruption of their nature should for a while exist and struggle for the mastery, in order that his grace may be the more magnified in its destruction at last, and that pride may be for ever hidden from their eyes. But ultimately he will utterly destroy it, and in the interval afford them sufficient grace to maintain the conflict with it. The bush that burned with fire and was not consumed is an apt emblem of the believer's bosom during the present life. Its preservation arose from God's presence in it. A garrison beleaguered by its enemies without, and divided by a mutiny within, is apparently in a hopeless state; but, if Omnipotence be engaged for its safety, it cannot be overcome.

But who are those who enjoy divine protection? Is it a common blessing? Is there no discrimination among the fallen race of Adam, with respect to it? Those only "who trust in "God" enjoy it in that extent to which our collect refers. Those indeed "who know not "God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord "Jesus Christ," are defended by God's providential care and restraining grace from innumerable evils, while they continue unconscious of the power by which they are protected. But their deliverances are all of a temporal and outward nature. They have no security from spiritual dangers. They are exposed to the wrath

of God, are a prey to the "roaring lion who "walketh about seeking whom he may devour," and are the miserable captives and slaves of corruption.

The persons then who are favoured with divine protection are all those, and those only, "who "trust in God." This is one of the most common characteristics of the godly in the Scriptures. And it is reasonable to expect that it should be so; for faith takes the precedence of all other graces of the Christian character. Those who are here described, perceive their exposure to all the evils of which sin is the meritorious and instrumental cause both in time and eternity. They know their inability to protect themselves; and therefore they confide in God for deliverance from eternal destruction, and from all its preludes and anticipations. Reader, dost thou trust in God? Scrutinize the habitual frame of thy heart, and let conscience dictate the reply.

The preface of our collect, continuing its strain of adoration and gratitude, proceeds to say that "without God nothing is strong." It is happy for us that "help is laid on one who is mighty "to save, on God manifest in the flesh." For finite interposition, of whatever kind, could have availed nothing to the expiation of our guilt, or to the conversion of our souls. And even after that "we have received the atonement," and are "turned from darkness to light, from the power "of Satan unto God;" our strength, independent of God's continual help, is like that of Samson when his Nazarite-locks were shorn—it is perfect weakness. Without divine help the Christian would be, like a machine that has lost its main spring, incapable of motion; like the machine of nature, were its primum mobile, the sun,

banished from its system; or like the human body, were air excluded from its lungs and heat from its blood-vessels. All life would be extinguished, and its tendency to destruction would be rapid. No act of divine life can be performed without that "strength" which is "made perfect in "weakness."

Moreover, "without God nothing is holy." It is through sanctification of his Spirit that there is any holiness in our persons or acts. His Spirit is therefore called "the Spirit of holiness." His "love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy "Ghost given unto us" is the cause and essence of all sanctity both of heart and life. The will and the power to conform ourselves to his law, which is the rule of holiness, are both from God.

On the preface of our collect which we have reviewed, is founded a most important petition. For we implore grace "that, God being our "ruler and guide, we may so pass through things "temporal that finally we lose not the things "eternal." From the connexion between the preface and prayer of our collect we may observe, that the promises of God, though their fulfilment is sure, do not supersede the necessity of supplication. For prayer is the appointed medium of communication between God and us. It is, in common with other instituted means, one of those "joints and bands by which nourishment is "ministered" to the members of Christ's mystical body; which, by their instrumentality, maintains its communion with its head. God is bound, by his covenant-relation to his people, to supply all their needs; but he has declared that for this he will be entreated.

Our petition implores an increase of divine mercy on our souls, that is, a further experience

of its riches. There can be no increase of this attribute in God; but there may be a further communication of its fulness made to us, and this we implore. Those who have been taught to "trust "in God," and who are under his protection, are already partakers of covenant-mercy; for faith and all its effects proceed from it. We have nothing that we have not received from him. But all the partakers of his mercy want larger and richer supplies. They are daily and hourly pensioners thereon, and they know their dependent state. To be a receiver of mercy is their highest honour and privilege. They never expect to get beyond the need of it; nay, they desire it not. The object of their highest ambition, either in time or in eternity, is a participation of the grace of God.

Our collect being intended for their use only, "who trust in God," it is assumed that he is "the ruler and guide" of all those who join in its recital. For all believers are under his governance and direction. They have been taught that it is both their duty and privilege to submit to the laws of his kingdom, and to give themselves up implicitly to the guidance of his word and Spirit. They have learned that they can only be safe and happy so long as God manages all their concerns, and sways his sceptre over their hearts and lives, defends them from their enemies, and disciplines both their spirit and conduct. The dangers and intricacies of the Christian life are so many and so great that they dread to be abandoned to their own wisdom and strength, and therefore habitually surrender themselves into the hands of him who is "the protector of all who trust in him, "without whom nothing is strong, nothing is "holy." Let me inquire whether God be my

"ruler and guide;"—whether I have really yielded myself up to the governance and guidance of his word and Spirit. On this inquiry depends my hope of being enabled "so to pass through things "temporal as not finally to lose the things "eternal."

This is the object of our petition. And, oh, how important an object it is! Surely the man who is not solicitous about it, is brutish, and devoid of rationality. We are only passengers through the present world towards eternity, to which we are drawing nearer every hour: and shall we be unconcerned whether we lose or gain the blessing of eternal life? Indifference on this subject is madness; anxiety is wisdom.

During our passage through things temporal we are exposed to a thousand dangers every step we take. We are not for a moment secure from destruction, but whilst God is "our ruler and "guide." The conduct of Israel through the howling wilderness was miraculous. They were fed, clothed, guided, protected, and saved, by a succession of miracles which God wrought on their behalf. The Christian pilgrimage is also conducted by a continued series of divine interpositions, less apparent indeed to the eye of sense, but equally manifest to the eye of faith. In God, by a derivation of help from him, the Christian believer lives, moves, and has his being.

Without the constant rule and guidance of Omnipotence, a safe transition through the present evil world would be impossible. As well might a man expect to pass through deep and rapid rivers without being drowned, or through a raging conflagration without being burned. The

world is a lion's den—a burning fiery furnace—a boisterous ocean, more wide and tumultuous than the Red Sea through which the Israelites passed. God must shut the lions' mouths, or we shall inevitably be devoured. He must suspend the violence of the fire, or we shall assuredly be consumed. He must open a way through the boisterous waves for his ransomed people to pass over, or we shall, without doubt, perish in them.

But if God be our ruler and guide, our security is absolute. For who can defeat his purpose, or disappoint his gracious aim in the salvation of his people? If God be for us, it matters not who or what is against us. In vain do earth and hell combine for the destruction of those "who "are kept by the power of God through faith "unto salvation."

The Christian is distinguished from others by his aim and end. His eye is taken off from "things temporal," and fixed on "things eter-"nal." He is "a pilgrim" and "a stranger upon "earth;" and he regards the things of time in the same manner in which a traveller regards the accommodations of an inn on his journey, or the conveniences and inconveniences of roads and weather. He presses forward without feeling deeply interested in the circumstances of his route, home being the object of his affections. He is thankful indeed for any comforts in his way; but these are not his supreme object. His desires are alive to "things eternal," and to obtain them his exertions are roused. The danger of losing them excites his fears; and the hope of possessing them is the spring of his joys.

Reader, are you a pilgrim and a stranger here

in the spirit and temper of your mind? Infatuated are they who choose the dreary desert for their place of rest; while the conduct of a Christian who is pressing forward towards Canaan is full of wisdom. Let him not be discouraged, God will be his ruler and guide; and under his direction and defence he shall find that the waters of Marah are as conducive to his eternal welfare as the grapes of Eshcol. If the latter attract him to press forward by their sweetness, the former drive him forward by their bitterness. The pillar of fire shall enlighten his darkness, and the pillar of a cloud shelter him from the noon-day heat. Manna shall be rained upon him, and the water from the rock follow him, till he arrive at the promised land.

The subject of our prayer is so important that, at the close of our collect, we repeat the request. "Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus "Christ's sake." To "pass through things tem- "poral so as not to lose the things eternal" is "the one thing needful" to a rational and immortal being. It is esteemed to be so by every conscious mind. "Grant this, O heavenly Fa- "ther," and we ask no more. "Guide us by "thy counsel, and then receive us to glory," according to thy promise. We have no merit indeed to plead for the purpose of obtaining this great and comprehensive blessing. We have no argument to adduce, derived from any personal qualification, wherewith to enforce our request. But we ask it "for Jesus Christ's sake." "If "thou sparedst not thy own Son, but deliveredst "him up for us all; we infer that thou wilt "with him also freely give us all things." "If "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;

" much more being now justified by his blood,
" we shall be saved from wrath through him.
" For if, when we were enemies, we were re-
" conciled to thee by the death of thy Son; much
" more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by
" his life."

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PATRIOTISM * is a virtue which is frequently and loudly extolled, but is seldom realised. Indeed, when properly defined it can only dwell in the bosom of a genuine Christian; for it implies a freedom from selfishness which Christianity alone can produce. The vicious principle of self-love, wherever it is predominant, mars every virtuous feeling; and nothing can weaken its influence but the Gospel of Christ. But there is another kind of patriotism in the bosom of a Christian, besides that which is generally admired and applauded. He loves and prays for all of all nations, because they are capable of salvation by Jesus Christ. He feels indeed a particular interest in the welfare of his own country. So did St. Paul. (Rom. ix. 1–5.) But there is a society to which he is attached by bonds of closer amity even than those which bind him to his native country merely as such. The church of God throughout the world is the object which lies nearest to his heart. He is a citizen of the New Jerusalem.

* The word is here used in its legitimate acceptation, and not as opposed to loyalty, and associated with democracy and jacobinism.

That it is the duty and privilege of those who compose the various branches of the Catholic church to pray for its welfare, is evident from the exhortation of the inspired Psalmist, (Psal. cxxii. 6–9,) "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be "within thy walls, and prosperity within thy "palaces. For my brethren and companions' "sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee. "Because of the house of the Lord our God I "will seek thy good." To obey this injunction is a duty which we owe to our adorable Sovereign the King of kings and to our fellow-subjects. In the peace of Jerusalem, for which we are bound to pray, we include the spiritual improvement of the Catholic church, the advancement of all her members in internal holiness, and her undisturbed possession of all her external rights and privileges. We moreover implore the extension of her borders over all the earth, and the reduction of all nations under her governance from the rising to the setting sun. Here the desire of conquest and colonization cannot be too fervent or diffuse. There is no cause for an apprehension of weakening Christ's kingdom by extending it. And let us remember that our prayers on this subject must be accompanied with a corresponding activity to promote the object of our wishes, or they will be chargeable with hypocrisy. The promised destruction of Popery and Mohamedism, the restoration of the Jews, and the conversion of the heathens, should dwell on our hearts, and excite all the energies of our souls.

To the obedience of faith in complying with this divine exhortation a promise of personal advantage is annexed. "They shall prosper

"that love thee." In the general prosperity of Christ's mystical body the church the particular prosperity of every individual member is included. It is so in the body natural. General convalescence conduces to the comfort and vigour of the several parts and members. A concern for the prosperity of Zion is a proof of grace in the heart. Of that gracious concern fervent supplication is one satisfactory evidence. And while grace communicated is thus brought into exercise, it will be increased by fresh streams from its fountain, and by promised consolation from "the God of all grace."

The devout aspiration of a pious mind for the prosperity of Jerusalem is added. "Peace be "within thy walls, and plenteousness within "thy palaces." Come, O thou divine Spirit, and breathe on thy church. Fill it with holy and heavenly dispositions. Deliver it from "false doctrine, heresy, and schism." Make its members to be of one mind in the house of their God, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the "Spirit in the bond of peace." And oh, defend it from all its enemies without. Be thou "a "wall of fire round about her, and the glory in "the midst of her." Let a "plenteousness" of all spiritual blessings be found in all "her "palaces," the palaces of her King, where his name is recorded and his presence promised. There may "a feast of fat things, of fat things "full of marrow—a feast of wines, of wines on "the lees well refined"—be continually provided by her Lord, dispensed by her ministers, and enjoyed by her members.

In the eighth and ninth verses the holy Psalmist states the motives which excited in him that solicitude which he had expressed on behalf of

the church of God. "For my brethren and "companions' sakes I will now say, Peace be "within thee. Because of the house of the "Lord our God I will seek thy good." His motive was two-fold, corresponding with the two-fold requisition of the law—the love of his brethren, and the love of God. This motive is still in force within every pious heart.

The reader will already have perceived the correspondence which prevails between the devout Psalmist's prayer, and the collect of our church which is now under our notice. We obey the exhortation to "pray for the peace of "Jerusalem," while we lift up our hearts and voices, saying, "Grant, O Lord, we beseech "thee; that the course of this world may be so "peaceably ordered by thy governance, that "thy church may joyfully serve thee in all "godly quietness, through Jesus Christ our "Lord."

Our collect consists of a prayer, and a declaration of the end for which it is offered. We pray "that the course of this world may be "peaceably ordered by God's governance."

That the course of this world is most awfully disordered and deranged, is beyond a doubt. We speak not of natural disorder, either in the macrocosm or the microcosm, though this also is evident and an effect of the same cause. But we refer to moral disorder, and especially as it affects the comfort and welfare of society. The wars and tumults, the public law-suits and domestic feuds, which make up the history of the world, of particular nations, and of private families, afford full proof of our position. Almost every profession and every trade bears its testimony, directly or indirectly, to the disordered

state of the world. Law, physic, and divinity, the army and navy, and a thousand branches of manufacture, trade and commerce, will give evidence that the world is not what it must have been when it came from the hands of its benevolent Former. Whither can we direct our eyes without meeting proofs that sin is entered into the world? Its present state is frequently compared in Scripture to the wild ocean when it is lashed into tumult and confusion by a violent storm. The ancient church thus expressed her feelings on the subject:—"The "floods have lifted up, O Lord; the floods have "lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their "waves." Psal. xciii. 3. And she represents God (Psal. lxv. 7) as "stilling the noise of the "seas, the noise of their waves, and the madness "of the people."

The cause of this confusion must be co-extensive with the effect. And there is but one which can be proposed with the appearance of probability—*viz.* the universal corruption of human nature, derived with our being by descent from our fallen parents.

It is evident that nothing but the overruling providence of God could keep society in any kind of tranquillity, or preserve mankind from being the mutual executioners of each other, till the whole world became one vast Aceldama, or field of blood, and its now populous plains were again abandoned to their original tenants, the wild beasts of the field. It is humiliating to observe that man is compared in Scripture to almost every species of noxious and ferocious animals. The venomous serpent and viper, the ravenous wolf, the wild ass of the wilderness, the wild boar of the wood, the wild bull, the leopard,

the lion, the asp, and the cockatrice; these are the emblems of fallen man when destitute of converting or restraining grace, which the pen of inspiration has employed*. The character of mankind is also plainly delineated by St. Paul. (Rom. i. 29–31.) They are described, when given over by God to a reprobate mind, as "being filled with all unrighteousness, fornica-"tion, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; "full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malig-"nity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God; "despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil "things, disobedient to parents, without under-"standing, covenant-breakers, without natural "affection, implacable, unmerciful." (See also 2 Tim. iii. 2–4.) Such was the state of the heathen world when the Gospel was first published in it. And such is its state now wherever the Gospel is not preached. Is a difference apparent in Christendom? That difference is clearly the result, not of nature, but of grace—of restraining, if not of converting grace. Let any one observe the proud, envious, wrathful, malicious, selfish, and covetous dispositions of the human breast, as they are made apparent by their effects even in civilized society, and among those who are called Christians; and he will soon be convinced that, if men were unrestrained by human laws, they would prey on each other with all the ferociousness of brute beasts. The African slave trade, and the blood which European nations have shed both in the eastern and western hemispheres, afford a melancholy evidence of what man would do under the

* Matt. iii. 7; x. 16; xxiii. 33; Jer. ii. 24; Psal. lxxx. 13; Isa. xi. 6–9.

influence of his own infernal passions. "The "wicked are like the troubled sea when it can- "not rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."

God permits the moral evil which exists and abounds in the world for wise and gracious purposes, which it is in vain for us to scrutinize. His "judgments are unsearchable, and his ways "past finding out." We know, however, that God will at length bring glory to his own great name out of all the evil that now prevails. "Clouds and darkness are now round about "him; but equity and judgment are the habi- "tation of his throne."

In the midst of the apparent confusion that prevails, God still rules the world which he hath made. "The Lord on high is mightier "than the voice of many waters, yea than the "mighty waves of the sea." "He ruleth the "raging of the sea; when the waves thereof "arise, he stilleth them." "He sitteth above "the water-floods, and remaineth a King for "ever." He is not an unconcerned spectator of the conduct of his creatures; but he is the "King of all kings, and Governor of all "things." He carries on his own gracious purposes, notwithstanding the opposition which is made to them by earth and hell. And when "the manifold wisdom*" of God, employed in the curious involutions of his providence, is unfolded and exposed to the view of the blessed in the kingdom of God, everlasting wonder, love, and praise will occupy their transported bosoms, and employ their raptured tongues.

From the observations which have been made on "the course of this world" it appears that

* Πολυποικιλος σοφια.—Eph. iii. 10.

the petition of our collect is highly proper and necessary. Surely it is the duty and privilege of Christian believers, who have their eyes opened to discern what is concealed from others, to pray "that the course of this world may be "peaceably ordered by God's governance," that the lion's mouth may be shut and the leopard chained, and that in due time the moral change which the evangelical prophet has foretold may be fully and universally exemplified—when "the "wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard "shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, "and the young lion, and the fatling together, "and a little child shall lead them: when the "cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones "shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat "straw like the ox—when the sucking child "shall play on the hole of the asp, and the "weaned child shall put his hand on the cocka-"trice den — when they shall not hurt nor "destroy in all God's holy mountain; for the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the "Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Many reasons concur to justify such a prayer as that of our present collect, and to shew its importance. For though we know that God can elicit good from evil, yet it is our duty to deprecate the evil that threatens us. The general welfare of society, the special prosperity of the church, and above all the glory of God, are powerful motives to fervent supplication for public peace and tranquillity.

The specific end for which we now implore the interference of God in the government of the world, is "that his church may joyfully "serve him in all godly quietness."

The church is the grand object of divine care

and attention. The world is only a scaffolding to that spiritual edifice which God is erecting; and when the edifice is finished, the scaffolding will be taken down and burned. The church is the kernel, and the world the shell; and when the kernel is fully ripe, the shell will be thrown away as of no further use. "The holy seed is "the substance,"—the only valuable part. Now the church is very dear to God as the purchase of his blood, the workmanship of his power and wisdom, the temple of his delights.

But of whom doth the church of God consist? What are the characteristics of its members, whereby they are distinguished from the world? "The church," saith Bishop Pearson*, "as it "embraceth all the professors of the true faith of "Christ, containeth in it not only such as do "truly believe and are obedient to the word, but "those also which are hypocrites and profane. "Many profess the faith, which have no true "belief. Many have some kind of faith, which "live with no correspondence to the Gospel "preached. Within, therefore, the notion of "the church are comprehended good and bad, "being both externally called, and both profess-"ing the same faith. For 'the kingdom of "'heaven is like unto a field,' in which 'wheat "'and tares grow together unto the harvest;' "'like unto a net that was cast into the sea, "'and gathered of every kind;' like unto a "'floor,' in which are laid up 'wheat and chaff;' "like unto a 'marriage feast,' in which some "have on the 'wedding garment,' and some "have not. This is that ark of Noah, in which "were preserved beasts clean and unclean. This

* Exposition of the Creed, Article IX.

" is that 'great house,' in which 'there are not
" 'only vessels of gold and silver, but also of
" 'wood and earth, and some to honour, and
" 'some to dishonour.' There are 'many called,'
" of all which the church consisteth; but there
" are 'few chosen' of those which are called and
" thereby within the church. I conclude there-
" fore, as the ancient Catholics did against the
" Donatists, that within the church, in the public
" profession and external communion thereof,
" are contained persons truly good and sanctified
" and hereafter saved; and together with them,
" other persons void of all saving grace, and
" hereafter to be damned."

" Of these promiscuously contained in the
" church, such as are void of all saving grace
" while they live, and communicate with the
" rest of the church; and when they pass out of
" this life, die in their sins, and remain under
" the eternal wrath of God; as they were not in
" their persons holy while they lived, so are they
" no way of the church after their death, neither
" as members of it, nor as contained in it.
" Through their own demerit they fall short of
" the glory unto which they are called; and
" being by death separated from the external
" communion of the church, and having no true
" internal communion with the members and the
" head thereof, are totally and finally cut off
" from the church of Christ. On the contrary,
" such as are efficaciously called, justified, and
" sanctified, while they live are truly holy, and
" when they die are perfectly holy; nor are they
" by their death separated from the church, but
" remain united still by virtue of that internal
" union, by which they were before conjoined
" both to the members and the head. As there-

" fore the church is truly holy, not only by an " holiness of institution, but also by a personal " sanctity in reference to these saints while they " live; so is it also perfectly holy, in relation to " the same saints glorified in heaven. And at " the end of the world, when all the wicked " shall be turned into hell, and consequently " all cut off from the communion of the church, " when the members of the church remaining " being perfectly sanctified shall be eternally " glorified; then shall the whole church be truly " and perfectly *holy*."

Let the reader consider seriously the awful distinction which this excellent Bishop has here presented to us in his definition of "the holy " Catholic church." You are a member of the church, which is indeed universally holy by its " institutions and administrations of sanctity." But are you personally holy " by a real infused " sanctity?" Without this, your connexion with " the holy Catholic church" will only aggravate your condemnation in that day when the chaff shall be winnowed from the wheat, when the tares shall be bound in bundles to be burned, and the wheat gathered into the garner. O let us be concerned that, while we live in " the " great complex body of the universal church," we partake of the blessing which is confined to those who, being " called with a holy calling," have obeyed that call, and are " renewed in the " spirit of their minds." Then shall we be at length completely happy, when Christ shall " present us unto himself a glorious church, not " having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

This " holy Catholic church," embracing all in all nations " who call on the name of the Lord " Jesus," is very dear to God on account of those

who therein "worship him in the Spirit, rejoice "in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the "flesh." Its interests are the object of his unceasing concern, and continually call forth the exertion of his wisdom and power. Dear however as the church is to God, he sees fit to leave it for a while in a sinful and disordered world. Here, like a helpless woman (Rev. xii. 6) banished into a wilderness, the church is entirely dependent on God for her support and preservation. Hereby the glory of God and the final good of his church are promoted. Hereby an opportunity is afforded for a display of the divine perfections, which are all daily magnified, in the sight of men and angels, by the conduct both of providence and grace towards the church which "God hath purchased with his own blood." And hereby also immense advantage is derived to the genuine members of the invisible church, to all true believers, similar to that which the Israelites obtained from their long and difficult passage through the wilderness. When they are arrived at the "good land which floweth with" heavenly "milk and honey," they will gratefully "remem- "ber all the way which the Lord their God led "them in the wilderness, to humble them and "to prove them, to know what was in their "heart whether they would keep his command- "ments or no"—how "he humbled them, and "suffered them to hunger, and fed them with "manna which they knew not"—how "their "raiment waxed not old upon them, neither did "their foot swell." They will "consider in their "hearts," (and the consideration will swell their songs of praise,) "that as a man chasteneth his "son, so the Lord their God chastened them." They will remember with eternal gratitude how

" the Lord led them through the great and ter-
" rible wilderness" of this world, " wherein were
" fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought;
" where there was no water:" and how he
" brought them forth water out of the rock of
" flint"—how " he fed them in the wilderness
" with manna, that he might humble them and
" prove them, to do them good at their latter
" end." Thus will they be preserved for ever from saying, " My power and the might of my
" hand hath gotten me this wealth," this " ex-
" ceeding and eternal weight of glory." Thus they will have learned that " salvation is of the
" Lord," and will have been prepared to join eternally in singing " salvation to God and the
" Lamb."

The present state of the church may fitly be illustrated by that of the ship in which our Lord's disciples were embarked on the lake of Gennezareth; and the petition of our collect by the impassioned cry of the affrighted disciples on that occasion. (Matt. viii. 24.) The disciples of our Lord were in apparently great danger, and exercised with great conflicts. In their extremity they called on their Lord for help. But he, for a while, appeared to be unmindful of them. At length, roused by their importunity, he arose and interposed for their deliverance, and in due time brought them to " the haven where
" they would be."

Let us now revert to our collect, and consider what we therein implore. We look up to God as the Governor of the universe. We consider his church as the great object of his care, and we beseech him to order all things in the course of his providence so as to promote its welfare.

And forasmuch as it appears to us that a peaceable state of the world is best calculated to promote his glory and the advantage of his church, we pray, without pretending to prescribe to his wisdom or to direct his measures, that peace may universally prevail among men. We recollect that the time of our Lord's nativity was an era of general tranquillity among the nations of the earth, and that "the churches throughout "all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, having "rest" from tumult and persecution, "were "edified, and, walking in the fear of the Lord "and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, were "multiplied." Acts ix. 31. It is admitted that the members of the Christian church may, in the most perilous times, privately serve God, as Paul and Silas did in the prison of Philippi. It is also allowed that times of tumult and persecution have proved seed-times to the church, and that "the blood of the martyrs has been "the seed of the church." But though God, by the alembic of his power and wisdom, hath distilled good from evil, and hath made "the "wrath of man to praise him," yet according to our short-sighted apprehension (and perhaps the apprehension is generally true) a peaceable state of the world is most favourable to the growth of the church in internal purity and excellence, and to the enlargement of her borders. These are the objects which she proposes in her present prayer; and they are objects, compared with which the rise and fall of empires are, in the scale of just estimation, lighter than the small dust of the balance. The worldly mind desires a peaceable course in the affairs of this present world, with a view to the increase of

commerce, the promotion of human science, and to personal or national aggrandizement. But these are inferior objects of concern to the genuine members of the Christian church. The prosperity of Zion, involving the glory of their God and the salvation of precious souls redeemed by the blood of Christ, is with them the paramount consideration. "Pray for the peace of "Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. "Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness "within thy palaces. For my brethren and "companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be "within thee. Because of the house of the "Lord our God, I will seek thy good."

Let the reader inquire whether he be a genuine member of the church of God or not. His feelings towards the church will determine the weighty question. If its interests lie near his heart, and the promotion of its prosperity be the object of his fervent prayers and strenuous efforts, then he may conclude that he is indeed a living branch in the true Vine. But how guilty are those who, while the church is engaged in earnest prayer for a continuation of her inestimable privileges, pour contempt on the means of grace by neglecting them! How evident it is that such persons have no part nor lot with "the city of the living God" in her spiritual immunities and comforts, whatever outward relation they may claim to her communion! But if we are indeed united to the church and her head, how thankful should we be that the prayers which we have offered on her behalf have hitherto been answered, and particularly with relation to our own branch of the Catholic church. We sit this day "under our own vine

"and fig-tree, none making us afraid." We hear the Gospel, unite in public devotion, and assemble ourselves around the table of the Lord, unmolested and uninterrupted. O how great the favour! While the storm rages over Europe, we are hid "in the cleft of the rock." May gratitude fill our hearts, and praise for ever employ our lips!

END OF VOL. II.

ERRATA.

Page 6, line 15, *for* though, *read* thou
61, — 7, — man — a man
83, — 6, *note*, *for* directed, *read* directly
—, — 8, — — is, *read* are
207, — 6, *after* design, *insert* of
347, — 25, *for* This, *read* His
417, — 1, *note*, *for* possident, *read* possidet

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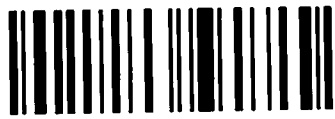
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